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BOUND IN SHALLOWS

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FICTION

DEDICATED TO MY HUSBAND,

CHARLES J. YAEGLE,

WHOSE APPRECIATION AND HELPFULNESS
HAVE MADE MY WRITING POSSIBLE.

Fiction
Phillips, M
.B6
1930

BOUND IN SHALLOWS.

(A Cape Cod Idyll)

STELLA HOWARD was a widow in the thirties. She and her former husband, Winfield Howard, had a very happy, congenial married life. His death had been a terrible shock to her, and at the time of which I write, the summer of 1929, she was just beginning to recover from the effects of her loss.

She had opened up her charming summer cottage, in Harport, at Cape Cod. Rosemary McClaren was one of a number of interesting people who were her guests during the season. She was also a widow about the same age as Stella, and their similarity of tastes had drawn them together and made them companionable. On the evening of Mrs. McClaren's arrival, a group were gathered to meet her in the charming living-room. A small parlour-grand piano occupied one corner, and Stella's bright, amber hair glistened under the roseate shade of the standing lamp that threw its light over her as she sat at the piano playing an accompaniment for her niece, Alice Britton, who was singing "Lucky Girl," one of the popular songs from "The Show Boat."

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Alice was blonde and petite, svelte and chic, her glossy, ashen, blonde hair was set in smooth, gentle waves then popular. Mortimer Evans, one of her friends, sang with her. He was a handsome, blue-eyed boy, dark waving hair, of the Celtic type. He had come over from the Belmore Hotel, where he was spending the summer, with his father and mother. Their home was at Boston, Massachusetts. Mortimer was just twenty-two, Alice was twenty. She had a great penchant for young men; anyone older than twenty-six or twenty-seven was too ancient for her attention. George Verner, another of her friends, of about the same age as herself, sat on the couch with Beatrice Mayo, a chum who had come to visit her from her home in Freeport.

Stella had invited John Stone, a friend of Mrs. McClaren's, to be one of this house-party at her cottage. John had loved Rosemary McClaren for many years, but she had been a widow for some time, comfortably well off, and really never had been sufficiently tempted to change her state.

John and the two other men of the party were having their after-dinner smoke on the veranda. One of the other two men was a very well-known writer, a single man in the thirties, handsome, elegant in manner, of southern ancestry, Allen Tyler. The third man, Malcolm Buhl, was a widower, a little older than the other two, a business type of man. He was a wealthy iron manufacturer of Pittsburgh. The last two were very much interested in Stella.

The four young people had spent the day on Hyannis

Bay. A good catch of trout had supplemented the dinner. The others had had an afternoon of golf at the Better Hole Course. It was Saturday evening. Mortimer Evans had come over to take the young folks to the Belmore to dance, and they presently trooped off, climbed into Mortimer's Cadillac, and started for the hotel.

Mrs. McClaren proposed a game of bridge, which left Malcom Buhl to cut in, but he had to catch the "Cape Codder" for New York. John Stone and Mrs. McClaren played double solitaire while Stella and Allen Tyler drove Malcolm Buhl to the train.

Allen Tyler and Stella, returning, remained out on the veranda, where they could look out over the pounding surf. The month was July, and the moon was glorious. Its beams played lovingly in mercurial ripples lit up by a giant searchlight in a sweeping sheet of liquid rays diverging over the calm waters of the Bay. The porch was screened in, and it was a delightful spot, affording protection from the mosquito, the particular pest of Cape Cod, and, in fact, of most of the shore resorts during the season.

Allen Tyler had just remarked:

"Do you know, Stella, to-night reminds me of the first time we met. It was just such a night last February."

"Yes, it was, on the veranda overlooking the sea at the Coney Plaza Hotel, in Miami Beach. The moon was glamorous, just as it is to-night."

"That should be a good omen."

"I'm sure it is. I have enjoyed our friendship so

much. It is wonderful to have someone to talk to about the things that interest us both."

"Yes, your friendship, Stella, has also been a great boon to me. It is not often that two such congenial spirits get together. Mine has been a rather solitary life. My writing has crowded out a great deal."

"That is what you have paid for fame. They say that solitude is necessary for the writing of the things that will live."

"Yes, so they say, but, alas, I have not written anything great."

"You are too modest, Allen. You have already made a great name for yourself in letters."

"It is your generosity that says that, Stella."

"Nonsense. Everyone says so."

"Well, Lady Comforter, let's not talk about me any more. What shall we do to-morrow?"

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Malcolm Buhl had returned to Harport the day that Allen had left in his car for a few days of writing in the seclusion of his mountain sanctuary. He had a rustic house in the Ponticoes, where the solitude invited when the creative muse was kindly.

Malcolm basked in the tang of the Cape Cod breezes, and quickly shed his preoccupation with business. Stella and he were a little apart from the other bathers in the party, in several groups on the beach that stretched smilingly between the sea and the cottage on the cliff. Bright umbrellas, bedecked with bathing beauties, diving through space, gaily striped deck chairs and back rests, bright pyjama suits, cooley

coats, bandanas, laughing eyes, rosy cheeks and rouged lips, spattered the sand and blue sea with splashes of radiant colour.

Stella always liked to talk to Malcolm. They were never at a loss for a topic. Although absorbed in business, he kept up his reading and appreciated good literature. Their friendship had been more of the head than the heart, but Stella at times caught a look in Malcolm's eyes that made her just a little wary of giving him too much encouragement. She valued his friendship, but had felt somehow he would be inadequate as a husband. He was so self-sufficient, apparently, and so evidently satisfied with himself, his prospects, his business and avocations. Surely, a mere woman would be an almost unnecessary adjunct to such a complete menage, and being a mere adjunct would have been far from satisfying to Stella ; besides, Allen Tyler had captured her imagination, but it was Malcolm who did so many practical things to help her. It was he that had purchased and installed the new radio. Touch a key and it was adjusted. All the lovely programmes of W.E.A.F., W.O.R., W.J.Z., etc., came through perfectly, except for static and code messages, which at times were deafening ; but it was well to turn it off occasionally. One enjoyed it all the more, especially when the moon was the only light as the strains came through to the veranda, with its wide arches giving glorious vistas of the moonlit sea.

Strange how apropos the songs of love were. Malcolm's ear was keen. He had often given Stella a start, as he repeated an impassioned phrase, and she

had been a little disappointed to realise it had been just a quotation. She might know that Malcolm wouldn't say anything like that, although he had quoted with a relish. She sat leaning against a blue-striped canvas back-rest, her hand lay on the sand, his back was to the others as he lay stretched out, and no one saw his hand close over Stella's.

"I love you, sweet," he said, as his eyes met hers.

Stella was completely taken by surprise, not so much by the words as by the electric tingle when his hand held hers. Why should she respond involuntarily to Malcolm Buhl? She did not love him. It was inexplicable to her, and something altogether new in her experience. She looked at him with startled eyes, wondering if he felt what she did. He kept on holding her hand.

Stella had asked him if he had been lonesome in the city. (He had been a widower for some years.)

"No," he said, "I am never lonesome. I am always happy. I wake up in the morning singing. I enjoy my business. It is not hard. Putting it on a lucrative basis has been like playing an intricate game, and I thoroughly enjoy watching it develop. When I am at home, I love to listen to the radio. I enjoy working at my stamp collection. I love to drive, I like the opera, concert courses, lectures—in fact, I thoroughly enjoy living. I do not have time to be lonesome."

Stella felt chilled by his self-sufficiency. "Surely," she thought, "there can be only a small niche for a mere woman in such a complex."

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Rose McClaren was working occasionally at her writing. She had a fairly successful novel and several books of poetry to her account, which had received some recognition. John Stone, a bachelor of about sixty, had been wooing her off and on for several years. Stella invited him to visit them. Rosemary liked being single. She never would have written her poetry if she were married. She loved John's attentions, and it was great to have him to beau her around, dance with her and take her driving, and last, if perhaps not least, make gentle love to her ; but she was not thinking of marrying John. She had said to Stella :

" He is such a gentleman, and has a fine mind. We enjoy the same books and have so many tastes in common. He is splendid company ; and he is not obstreperously in love, just companionable ; perhaps he's a little too old to be a nuisance. He's about sixty, he says. His mother lives with him, and he is devoted to her. She is a good friend of mine, too, but I prefer to remain Rosemary McClaren."

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Alice Britton, Stella's niece, was the daughter of a brother, who had a houseful of children younger than Alice. Stella, being childless, was glad to give her niece the benefit of a social life not possible for her in her own home. She spent most of her summers with her aunt, and made her many other prolonged visits in her Pittsburgh city home, as well as accompanying her on her southern winter trips. Stella was almost a second mother to her. Alice was a fine girl, but of

the daring, modern flapper-type, that could easily use more than two mothers to keep her in tow. Mortimer Evans was her satellite just now. Beatrice Mayo was her chum. George Verner, a dark, tall, well-built athletic youth, had been Beatrice's escort, but one could readily see that Alice's come-hither eyes were more attractive to him than the passive brown orbs of Beatrice. She expected attention, but made absolutely no effort to hold it. She was a pretty, cute-looking, daintily-fashioned young girl. Her face was unexpressive, piquant and demure, yet stolid. If she felt anything beyond ennui, her expression would never tell you so. Her voice had a little bored whine when she spoke, and a habit of saying ple-e-ase ! frequently. Although attractive, she only shared the attention that Alice commanded. Beatrice always had a beau, when with Alice, but the beau was part of Alice's audience, and no telling when she might appropriate him ; but he was usually one whom she had played with a bit and dropped for a newer face. Alice was slight, and with hardly more development than a child. She seemed to float from one crush to another without an impress of any kind. Stella explained it, by considering her as immature. She was so petite, she seemed only a child, and one noticed it was the mature, fully-developed girls who took love seriously and married early.

The four young people had just come from the Belmore Swimming Pool. They were discussing another young couple, who had been with them, Angela Bolton and Jack Morton. Angela's mother had a cottage at

West Harport, and Jack's people also lived nearby. Angela seemed to have some sort of a mortgage on Jack. He came at her beck and call, although evidently not greatly enamoured, if one could judge by the way he diffused his attentions to include the other girls. Angela had a way, although only sixteen, of wishing to appear the last word as a "good fellow" and "up to snuff." She would mysteriously separate a boy from the crowd, and they would be later observed parked in a car, quite out of view. Some of the boys openly turned down her petting invitations, with a sneer. She was far from popular, and the others, both boys and girls, took pains to show her that they did not approve of her extreme flapperisms, but she was callous to everything except her own wants, even to her own evident lack of popularity. She was an only daughter, and her mother had humoured her until now she was beyond all control. The only reason she was tolerated by the young folks at all, was that she had a brother who was a nice chap who was friendly with the same group. Her mother permitted her to invite Jack Morton to stay the night, when he escorted her home, and made no attempt of objection to their smoking and lolling around together in their pyjama suits. It was a toss-up to the group whether she thought it didn't matter, or, if it did, that she couldn't help it; but they all knew she permitted it. The mother appeared to be a fine, sensible woman; but it was evident that she had no control over Angela.

The group were laughing about something that had happened at the pool. Angela had come in gowned in

a pink-flowered georgette ensemble, with pink canvas shoes, and a little pink felt hat moulded to her blonde, bobbed head. Although Jack Morton trailed her, she had ignored him, and centred her attentions on athletic George Verner, who was contemplating the pool, where some of the group were already swimming. She whispered to him, and took his arm to lead him away with her.

"Ple-e-ease! Another projected petting party," whined Beatrice, in the pool, loud enough for the group to hear her. George turned red to the roots of his hair, and, without a word of warning, gave Angela a shove that landed her head first in the pool in all her pink regalia.

"My, but she was mad!" said Alice, as they all laughed uproarously at her dismayed reappearance as she bobbed up to the surface; but it didn't take her long to decide to take it good naturedly, and to display her good swimming. Alice ran quickly for her robe to cover Angela's clinging ensemble, almost more revealing than nakedness. George was sheepish after his rudeness, and apologised quite handsomely. The girls had a scramble afterwards to deck Angela out in their clothes.

They were still laughing as they filed into the cottage veranda. It seemed ducking the girls, in all their finery, was a regular stunt of George's. He'd done it before. Alice warned him, in no uncertain tones, if he valued her friendship that he'd better never try it on her.

"Nor on me either, Mr. George, ple-e-ease!" said Beatrice.

"I don't try it on friends I value, Swee-e-tart," George answered, with a sheepish grin.

"You'd better not!" they chorused.

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"There was something truly magnetic about Allen Tyler," thought Stella, as she studied his handsome face. They had the cosy alcove in the sun-room to themselves. Stella reclined on a deep blue *chaise longue*, piled high with downy pillows of the same colour. Allen sat beside her in an easy chair, reading from the manuscript of his latest volume of poetry.

It had already been accepted by MacMarrons, and its publication date was to be in the near future. Allen long since had justly made for himself an enviable reputation as a savant and poet.

As Stella listened to his well-modulated voice, she was entranced as by orchestral music. The poems were lovely. At one time she imagined herself hearing the joyous tones of youth, and then the passionate vows of love, the anguish of heart-break and despair, the voice of hope, the light of faith. They were magnificent. They stirred and thrilled her soul as no other poems had ever done. "Truly here is a master poet," she thought, as her eyes rested on his fine countenance. His eyes held hers as his lips pronounced the music of an ardent love, in the exquisite and refined idiom of gentle speech, with nothing of the neurotic passion of the modern realism.

"What fools some writers make of themselves," Stella said, "with their ludicrous attempts to garb their commonplace and ordinary sexual experiences in

the high language of poetry. How differently you write. Love is raised to its true place among the stars and moonlight, with none of the dross of the bourgeois discussions of the anatomy of bosoms and loins to drag it into the mire. The ecstasy of love has nothing to do with human anatomy," Stella said. "It loses itself to find itself in dreams. When it sinks to the level of sensual analysis, it is not love, it is salacity or worse."

"How right you are," said Allen, looking at her lovingly.

"Poor misguided realists," she said, "in seeking to pin the moth to earth, the soul had fled, and they never knew how they had killed the lovely thing, and withered its beauty. Once pinned to earth, and its slime, how could it soar among the flowers, the sunlight, the moonlight of love?"

"How indeed!" said Allen, evidently delighted.

"Allen," she whispered, "you must have loved divinely to write such poetry."

"Not necessarily," he said. "It is erroneous to suppose one must have experienced all that one writes about. I did love that woman, but I have loved others more," he said, as his eyes lingered with Stella's. "True, she inspired the poem, but don't you know there is such a thing as sublimation—the creation of beauty in a poem, or work of art—by transferring the emotion to its expression in words or in painting, or to the stone of a statue?"

This was a new idea to Stella, and she was not quite

sure that she liked it. She looked curiously at Allen, as she said:

"To express an emotion by a poem, but not really to have lived the emotion, except in dreams? Well, as for me, given a choice, I am sure I'd rather live it." Allen was a bachelor. Was this the reason he thought like this, Stella wondered; bachelors are abnormal, of course, obviously, she concluded. Does sublimation explain some bachelors? The tail of her eye wandered curiously, again to study Allen's soulful face, as he read on, in his impassioned voice. She soon was lost again in its music. The litany to his lady-love seemed to be addressed to her, and she found herself responding to it. When her eyes met Allen's, they kindled to the fire in his, an electric current from eye to eye. Stella felt herself quiver responsively. "Am I falling in love with him?" The query was pleasantly agitating.

His hand held hers, in gentle pressure, as they said good-night, their glances loitered, each trying to read the other. Stella wondered, "Could he love me? I believe that I could return his love." His eyes drew her to him but she could discern no pledges in them.

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Stella and Rosemary McClaren sat on the veranda, after their morning coffee. The men, John Stone and Malcolm Buhl, had gone over to the Better Hole Golf Course. Hyannis Bay was as calm as a pool, the tide was out, the sand formed a crude crescent to the westward, and the beach was sprinkled with bathers, a red suit or cap punctuating the grey-blue water and beige sand. The sky was grey, too—a lazy, warm day. A

nice chance for their undisturbed chat. Stella also wrote a little poetry, and kept up with the best in literature. Laughingly, Rosemary said :

" Stella, if I were a man I'd want to marry you. We have similar tastes and love the same things." The two women were very congenial and fond of each other.

They got discussing the sophisticate trend of the so-called *intelligentsia* of the day. Both met and knew many authors, in following their avocations of writing. Neither were sophisticates. Rosemary said :

" It has just been dawning upon me that there is something insidious in the breadth and scope of the sophisticate influence of the best-sellers of the day. A great many omnivorous readers who devour all the late fiction, are drinking up the sour wine of this philosophy without a thought of the underlying belief or rather unbelief, back of it all, for the very foundation of it is atheism, agnosticism, disillusion with faith and love, and a general acceptance of the futilism of a life, which ends with the grave, thrown in for good measure. The natural conclusion follows : gather the roses while you may, and make no promises for to-morrow."

Stella said :

" There are very few who are thoughtful enough to realise how widely this pernicious philosophy is practised and preached by the majority of our novelists, poets and philosophers, and although they are in the minority compared with those who do not write, still their influence is far more tremendous because they do write and are read by the millions. I wish we could do some-

thing to show them up. Rose, what can we do?" And Mrs. McClaren had answered:

"Let the women of the world know about it. Open their eyes to the danger that is threatening the strongholds of their faith, and the sanctity of their homes. We used to glory in fine sentiments, but to-day the *intelligentsia* satirise them and sneer at all our treasured beliefs in constancy or faithfulness in love, in immortality of the soul, all our fond hopes for God's help and loving care in this world, for surcease from pain, and for happiness in the world to come. For these they substitute the felicities of sex-attraction, and a permit to enjoy them without moral inhibition, with the assurance that death ends all responsibility. Why, that little chit of sixteen, Angela Bolton, quoted from Durant's *Transition* to me the other day, and said it exactly expressed her view—that is, that death ends everything. the little minx is living her philosophy, too. She glibly talked of marrying Jack Morton, 'just a companionate marriage you know,' she said, 'until we get tired of each other.' Yet only the other day I heard a speaker at the Woman's Club raving over Durant's books."

"Yes, I heard her, too," said Stella. "She had swallowed the Book Review blurbs—bait, hook, and sinker—and never thought that she was teaching unbelief in God and the life of the soul. She's probably a good church member."

"Why, yes," said Rosemary, "I heard Maxim Bodesforbad, the noted critic and poet, say he needed no woman, as wife, to interfere with his freedom. No

love endured long enough to chain him to matrimony, with alimony tacked to its tail. He added, 'The world is full of women and love. Help yourself.' You can see by the newspapers he practises what he preaches."

"Yes," said Stella, "and that's the man who headed the committee, picked by Mrs. Martin, another good church member, to bestow her prize for the best first book of poetry of the year. His judgment prevailed, too. The winner's book teemed with neurotic poetry and the hot breath of passion, with all its realistic descriptions of human anatomy. The sophist philosophy triumphant again! Can't we start up some opposition? Let's think it over. How about a league for the preservation of the old-fashioned sentiments of constancy in love, belief in home ties, faith in God and the immortality of the soul?"

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Alice and Beatrice had been on the beach all day with the rest of the group. Two older men had joined them, acquaintances of Jack Bolton's, wealthy sportsmen, who had come for the Regatta at Chatham Bars. Their boats were entered for the races. One of them, a handsome blonde chap, with laughing eyes, and a daredevil look, had immediately admired Alice, and she, with her penchant for being attracted by a new face, flattered his vanity by giving him her undivided attention. The afternoon closed with Beatrice and Alice having tea with the new-comers at the Belmore. Plans were broached by the men for the evening, and the girls accepted their invitation for a moonlight drive and dancing at the hotel.

Stella thought the young people were together as usual, but when the girls were not in their rooms at 4 a.m. she became thoroughly alarmed and, awakening Mrs. McClaren, confided her anxiety. The latter shared her fears.

When they were still wondering what to do, the door-knob turned and the two girls, sadly dishevelled, stood in the doorway. They were carrying their high-heeled slippers, Angela's of bright red, and Beatrice's blue. They both were evidently exhausted, their stockingless legs scratched, their pretty dresses bedraggled. The two older women exclaimed in astonishment at the shipwrecked girls. After much questioning, the story came out. The men, well supplied with their own liquor, had drunk too much, and they had become so free with their attentions that the girls became alarmed. The drinking had made the men ugly and quarrelsome, as well as reckless in their driving. They had had a near accident and altercation with the occupants of another car ; in fact they got out of their car to fight it out.

Alice and Beatrice, now badly frightened and glad of this opportunity, had made their get-away, running down to the beach, to give their escorts the slip. Finding it impossible to walk in their high-heeled slippers, they had taken them off, and for hours had been tramping home alone, in the sand.

Stella later learned the men were millionaire sports, who, although married, ran around with show girls most of the time. Their hunt for amusement did not exempt the two young girls as their lawful prey.

Stella's pre-emptory mandate that they were never to accept the invitations of strange men had been impressed by the painful episode.

With a "Ple-e-ease!" from Beatrice, and "You bet I never will again, Aunt Stella," from Alice, the foot-sore, weary and frightened girls crept quickly and meekly into their beds.

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John Stone had been getting restive under Rosemary McClaren's complaisant acceptance of his attentions. They were having a tête-à-tête on the veranda overlooking the sea. Rosemary's blue-grey eyes reflected their usual tranquillity as she amiably contemplated John's rather vexed expression. He was nice to look at; tall, refined-looking and slender. His hair was almost grey with a slight wave. He was really handsome and debonair. Some years ago he had been more ardent and undivided in his attentions. But of late, perhaps because of Rosemary's unresponsiveness, he had shown a tendency to make himself attractive and gallant to other women. Perhaps he thought he might arouse a little jealousy in Rosemary's breast. She didn't like it any too well, as she had been so accustomed to his undivided attentions; but in a way it lessened her pride in him and his charm for her, and made her wonder if he weren't rather vain anyhow in seeking the attentions of other women. On the whole it had lessened his hold on her.

A widower, one of the cottage owners in Harport, Robert Gray, had been one of the group at the cottage lately. He was a younger man than John Stone—

about forty, much nearer Rosemary's age, and he evidently thought she was most attractive. This new-comer on the scene was another reason for John Stone's restiveness. He said :

" Rosemary, we've known each other a good many years and you know I love you. Won't you make up your mind to marry me ? "

" Oh come, John, don't be so serious. You know very well the happiest life is to always court and never wed. We are enjoying our friendship together ; why spoil it ? "

" Perhaps that may satisfy you," he said, " but it's not enough for me. You seem to like Bob Gray pretty well."

" Oh, nonsense," Rose laughed. " I've just met him."

John came a little closer to Rosemary, and his arm stole around her as he drew her towards him, putting his cheek close to hers as he whispered :

" Can't you love me a little, dear ? "

" Oh, John, you know I think an awful lot of you. We have had such good times together. But I don't want to get married. We're having too good a time as it is. Come on, cheer up and be yourself," she said, as they answered the summons for dinner.

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Allen Tyler had driven in from the mountains. He and Stella had taken a drive down the road and were sitting in the car looking out over the sea. The moon was rising in a crescent, the sky was bright with stars,

and the air was balmy and delightful this summer evening.

Allen looked romantically handsome, and Stella felt it was quite thrilling to be with him. She had looked forward to his coming and now he was here. She said:

"It seems glorious to have you back again. I missed you so much. Were you lonesome for me?"

"Lonesome? You know I do not really know what that word means; I've never been lonesome."

"Surely you must have been lonesome for someone, some time. At your age you must have been in love several times."

Allen laughed as he said:

"In love? Yes, of course I've been in love, but not lonesome."

"Why haven't you ever married?"

"Well, with my profession of writing, for economic reasons I wasn't able to marry when I was a boy and I have got rather used to single blessedness now. As you know, my writing preoccupies me greatly."

"But how could your writing take the place of companionship?"

"Well, when I decided I couldn't marry, and my desires seemed overpowering, I got into the habit of finding relief by expression in my writing. You know, once you've expressed strong feeling there is a certain amount of relief in that. Often in a sublimation of the passion, the need for all expression is answered. This all goes for control; one gets the habit."

"I cannot imagine that. It would be completely beyond me. I feel the need of companionship. I

think that real love means that you just cannot get along without somebody else."

"Oh, my! I think that is stultifying. I would hate to think that anybody else was absolutely necessary to me."

"Well, that was the kind of love that Winfield Howard had for me. I am sure he asked me to marry him because he just couldn't do without me. And that was why I married him—I just couldn't do without him."

"Frankly, I do not believe in any such a love. No love is lasting; love is physical attraction, and it wears off. Why hamper one's self with marriage? It isn't fair to either one. You don't need to get married with all your money."

"Your point of view is all wrong, Allen," said Stella, somewhat horrified. "You don't know life, you cannot tell me anything about love. I was married happily before. There is nothing like it in the world. Real love is more than physical attraction—far more. Granted that may be the magnet which attracted first, but to me marriage is a sacred thing—a sacrament. I know because I have lived it. There is something holy and marvellous in the love of two happily-married people. When Winfield Howard died it was as if half of my body had been torn away, leaving the other half bleeding and bruised."

"You must have loved him deeply. It must be wonderful to have anyone love you like that. I don't believe that any one ever cared for me like that or that I have ever loved anyone that way. I can hardly

believe in such a love as that. But I do intensely long for you, Stella."

His eyes were lustrous with love, and Stella felt herself greatly drawn to him. He looked so romantically handsome. Still, something held her. There were no pledges in his eyes.

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Angela Bolton was again the topic of conversation. Jack was the centre of the group; Alice, Beatrice, Mortimer Evans and George Verner his audience. They were all imbibing orangeade, some with a dash of gin from a pocket flask. They sat on the cottage veranda. To "Where's Angela?" Jack had answered, "Gone to Atlantic City!" To the queries that followed, he recounted:

"Angela wanted to go to Atlantic City because Allen White is there. His sister invited her, so she went last night.

"Ple-e-ease! that's the boy who invited her to the prom last winter, isn't it?" asked Beatrice.

"Yes, he's the one," said Jack, dejectedly.

"O well, cheer up, old chap, she'll be back soon," Alice cheered him. She always turns up!"

"She came back from the prom, you know," said Beatrice.

The previous winter the girls had been in Miami at the Coney Plaza with Stella. Angela had been with her folks at their cottage.

Beatrice continued: "Allen White had invited her North to the prom at Cornell. Her mother said she could not go. Her father was away on a business trip.

Angela parked her mother at the movies, while she and a boy friend drove home for her grips and checked them at the Railroad Station. Returning for her mother, they drove her home and left her, ostensibly to go for a dance or so at the Lydo, a night club ; but they drove to the station, and Angela went to the prom. After waiting up until 3 a.m. her mother finally called up the boy for an explanation. He told her the truth. Timing her return before her father's, Angela came home after the prom was over. Letters followed from Allen White that Angela showed us. Ple-e-ease ! "

From the letters it was clear that if they were not married, they should have been, and that they needed no pointers on birth control from Margaret Sangster, but Angela had merely laughed at the girls' expostulations.

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Alice had been invited by Mortimer Evans to fly over the Bay in his hydroplane. There was room for Beatrice, too. Stella was a little loath to have them go, but flying is getting almost commonplace now, and she decided that it would be unwise to forbid the trip for several reasons. She had noted that the young folks had a way of doing what they wanted to, without asking permission or taking the chance of being forbidden, when they sensed there might be a refusal from headquarters. She preferred being a confidante as to their plans. Mortimer had been flying for a year now, and had made an excellent record. The day was clear, and the wind was not blowing when the three of them

motored off for Witchmere, one of the numerous little lakes that dot the Cape.

John Stone and Malcolm Buhl, who had driven up from Pittsburgh, were to play the lovely Chatham Golf Course, and Mrs. McClaren and Stella had been invited to the bridge at the Belmore. They had been playing about half-an-hour when a guest of the hotel addressed his wife at their table, rather excitedly, with :

" There's a plane in trouble over the Bay. Can't you stop a minute and come out ? "

They all dropped their cards and went out to the hotel veranda that overlooks the sea as far as the eye can reach. The wind had come up out of the north-west, the day was suddenly grey and a fog was rising. Sirens blowing from the seacraft could be heard in the distance. The plane was right over the Bay out in front of the hotel, flying extremely low, and seemed out of control. Just as they looked it took a nose-dive and crashed.

A number of people had joined Stella and Mrs. McClaren on the porch, and all rushed down to the beach. Of course, Stella at once thought of Alice and Beatrice, and she and Rosemary were almost panic-stricken. The Bay is very shallow, but the flyers were quite far out, which was luckier in case of crashing, but the girls were neither of them expert swimmers. Several of the men jumped into their cars and raced for Young's Harbour, close by, where boats could be hired. Stella and Rosemary followed and found places in Bob Gray's express cruiser, *Victor*, which was in the harbour with the captain and crew aboard. At Stella's

request they started to the rescue. Bob Gray's cottage is near Stella's, and he calls frequently on Mrs. McClaren, so she felt that they could ask the captain to go to the rescue. He knew them, as they had been frequent guests on the cruiser, which made about thirty miles an hour and carried eight passengers with comfort, on its fore and aft decks, with a cosy little cabin between.

The Belmore clerk had promised to try to locate Malcolm Buhl and John Stone at the Golf Club. It did not take long to get started, as the tide was in, but the fog had thickened and one could see nothing ahead. The suspense was terrible ; but the fog has sometimes a way of spreading and receding quite as quickly, and in one of these recessions, the wreck of the hydroplane could be sighted with figures clinging to it. As the speedboat got closer one could distinguish a man supporting a girl, another girl clinging to a dipping wing. Stella and Mrs. McClaren were now sure that they were Alice, Beatrice and Mortimer. A number of boats were coming to the rescue by this time. Some had put out from Witchmere Harbour, which was also nearby.

A row-boat was launched from the *Victor*, and the three were brought aboard. Mortimer was able to help himself, and not much the worse for his ducking, Beatrice had to be carried, but seemed able to speak. Stella's throat contracted with fright, as she caught sight of the limp and lifeless Alice. Something had struck her head in the crash, stunning her so that she had been able to do nothing to save herself, and, sinking at once, Mortimer had only been able to get his bearings

and barely caught her as she went down the third time. He managed to hold her head out of the water as he clung to the wreckage. Everyone was frightened and the women were crying.

The captain and one of the crew immediately placed Alice on the deck, face down with hips elevated. First-aid treatments were started, but with no success. Beatrice cried out: "Alice is dead!" Mortimer, now recovered from what had been for him merely a ducking and a shock, kept saying, "She can be revived! Keep at it! Keep at it!" and he continued raising her arms to force the air into her lungs; but it brought no results. There was not a sign of life when they had been working an hour.

Stella had given up hope. Her mind was in a tumult of grief as well as despair at thought of the awful news to break to Alice's mother and father. Malcolm Buhl and John Stone had been reached and had gone to the coast-guards for a pulmotor. Mortimer kept asking if they were getting it, as he continued, what the others considered, his futile efforts to revive the dead girl.

At last Malcolm arrived with the pulmotor. Mortimer had spent the previous summer as a coast-guard, and knew how to use it. His efforts were watched with dying hope, as Alice did not respond, but Mortimer, now white and shaking, still persisted. He would not give up. He continued his attempts to start respiration automatically. It seemed to Stella and the onlookers that he was meeting with no success, and Malcolm Buhl, taking John Stone aside, suggested getting her and the other women away from the painful sight of the hopeless

attempts at resusitation. Just then an "ah" of satisfaction from Mortimer indicated some change. Yes, the breathing was no longer forced, it was involuntary, the lungs were, at last, inhaling and exhaling, with labour, but naturally. The eyelids flickered, Alice lived! The fight was won. The reaction from grief made Stella and the other women almost hysterical. It was not long before Alice was moved, still limp, but recovering, to her own little bed at Stella's cottage; and a grateful household gave thanks in whispers for her recovery.

An underpinning of one wing had given way on the hydroplane, making it unmanageable and causing the crash; no one was to blame. Aircraft has some ways to go before it is as safe as automobiles now are, and Mortimer was quite a hero with the joy he had given everyone in bringing Alice back, and saving them all the horror of her death.

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The umbrellas of yellow and black, and chairs to match, had been spread over the glistening sand, and the bathers were mostly grouped about them, some lying full in the sun. There was an aroma of vinegar as a new arrival took the precaution to anoint his arms and neck, before old Sol got too busy.

"This is a good time for the effect of violet rays before the noonday," said Stella, as she moved a little from the shade of the beach umbrella. Malcolm Buhl, glad of the chance to get out of earshot of the rest, moved to the other side of her, with his back to the others; but so he could face Stella as

she reclined on a back rest, only her head in the shadow of the bright umbrella. She wore a black satin bathing suit over her Kellerman of the same colour, but her silk cooley coat, beach shoes and bandanna cap were violet.

Rosemary, a little further off, had a similar outfit of blue and yellow. Alice wore a red and white striped upper with little blue knickers, and a short red flannel coat and beret to match. The other girls had similar suits of blues, greens and other bright colours, almost like those of the boys except for their berets, bandannas, rubber caps and beach shoes, all making a voluptuous riot of shades against the sunlit beige sand, deep-blue skies, green seas and dashing spray.

Malcolm Buhl's hand now covered Stella's when the umbrella shut them off from the eyes of the others. Stella's startled eyes recorded the tremor which again surprised her as his hand enfolded hers. His eyes were lustrous, too, as he said, "Let me love you, Stella."

Almost too surprised at her own sensations to be voluble, Stella smiled. She thought herself in love with Allen Tyler, but his hand had never electrified her like this. She was exhilarated, and felt like laughing, but Malcolm was perfectly unconscious of the effect he was producing. Perhaps to laugh it off was best anyway. She was too much surprised to act otherwise than involuntarily. It seemed to be like that with her and Malcolm. The unexpected always happened and took control of the situation, while with her and Allen, the head always ruled the situation.

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Bob Gray had dropped in to inquire about Alice,

to say how glad he was that they had used his cruiser for the rescue, and to express his joy at Alice's comeback. In fact, the whole neighbourhood had been in to see her. She was a special favourite with everyone. Her bright, droll ways created many a laugh, and there was a general desire to provoke her mimicry and funny sallies. She sat, in a sea of pillows, bolstered up on Stella's blue *chaise longue,* and smiled at her host of retainers in truly queenly style, the more royal for the languor that still clung to her.

Mortimer had just taken her hand, and, rolling his eyes romantically, had said, " How is our little queen to-day ? "

" Recovering, my noble knight, thanks to thy chivalry and valour. Wilt not sit at my feet ? " And she curled her own up a bit to make room for him. The others took up the cue ; George Verner, jumping up, knelt at her side, grasped her hand and kissed it reverently, breathing a passionate " Swee-e-tart " that was answered by shrieks of laughter. Beatrice now came forward with a histrionic stride, bent her knee, and murmured, " Ple-e-ease ! gracious Majesty ! "

Jack shouted, " O, let me kiss thy foot, fair queen," rushed forward, grabbed her foot and covered her ankle with vehement kisses, and Alice nearly slid off the *chaise,* but they all rushed to her assistance and readjusted the pillows with laughter and friendly pats, while Jack knelt with arms extended, supplicatingly whining, " O, gracious Queen ! " Angela was the only one not laughing, her petulant face reflected the nausea that affected her when another girl held the centre of

the stage. "Snap out of it!" she almost screamed at Jack, at which the group shrieked again with laughter.

* * * * *

Bob Gray left the young crowd and went in search of Rosemary McClaren. He found her enjoying the sea breeze, ensconsced with a novel, on the veranda, where an occasional lifting of the eyes met an expanse of sea, breaking in splashing surf on the beach, framed in the arch of the porch. Her eyes lighted with pleasure. Bob was getting to be quite a favourite, with his lazy, good-natured manner. He was a big fellow, athletic, and more or less golf mad. At least, so thought Stella and Rose, when they discussed his propensity to make it thirty-six holes, as he had the previous July day, with the thermometer climbing to ninety.

His boyish blue eyes twinkled as he looked at the title of Rose's book.

"'Sense and Sensuality'—some title! Rather warm day for that, isn't it?" he asked, as he sat down where she made room for him on the swinging couch, with its blue cushions blending softly into the background of the grey weathered shingles of the cottage. Grey and blue are the favourite Cape Cod colours. Nearly all of the houses are grey, and many have blue shutters, and the vines of pink roses luxuriantly climb up the walls and over the roofs, trellises and fences, and bloom in profusion throughout July and most of August. They trailed over the arches of the porch and hung down in great clusters. This variety was very fragrant, and the little pink flowers were almost like bride's roses.

"Oh, it's not so warm as it sounds," said Mrs.

McClaren, answering Bob's reference to the novel. Authors try to make their books best sellers by giving them riské titles."

" But that one has some lurid spots, all right. Wait until you read the finish ! "

" I have just finished it ; but the newspapers recount such things daily, in spite of the temperature. Just telling about things that happen, really only gives you life whole, as it is, but actually to picture immoralities is another thing, and it's the peeping at keyholes that makes a book unfit to read."

" Yes, I know what you mean—unclean pictures. You can get them in a book as well as the movies."

" This book is all about unmoral people, but it tells you about them and their beliefs without realistic sensuous details. It gives the underlying beliefs, or rather unbeliefs, that actuate them, and of course lead to their disillusions and misfortunes." Rose continued :

" The characters are all sophisticates. Their conduct is motivated by their non-belief in God or any spiritual assistance or in love as a sentiment. The sophisticates believe in love only as a physical reaction, and as therefore transitory. Their philosophy is all wrong, and of course their lives are shipwrecked by it."

" I know," Bob answered, as his eyes rested admiringly on Rose. " Back of the novel, there is always what the author thinks about life, his beliefs and philosophy. ' The man behind the book,' as Henry Van Dyke puts it. If he is atheistic, and untrammelled by a belief in love as a sentiment, combining affection and attraction, the characters are unmoral."

" Yes, unmoral, unhappy, disillusioned, disgusted with the futility of life. They make an awful mess of it or commit suicide."

" Nice, cheerful reading, isn't it ? Van Dyke calls them the ' Damn it all ' writers.

" I never read anything more depressing."

" Well, it seems to me one couldn't write a better argument for the helpfulness of faith and real love in the universal search for happiness."

" That's true. So I can't see where they are immoral books."

" On the contrary."

" What do you believe about love ? " Rose asked archly.

Her sudden question took Bob unexpectedly. He coloured a bit under his sun tan, which, with his mane of dark hair, made him appear duskier than he was. Love was the very topic he'd choose with Mrs. McClaren, so he waxed enthusiastic.

" What do I believe about love, Mrs. McClaren ? Well, that's some question." He smiled, and his blue eyes gained lustre as they rested approvingly on Rose, her cheeks like soft, pink petals, grey eyes full of fun. The orchid silk sport dress, and linen shoes of the same colour, with sun-tan silk hosiery displaying her well-shaped limbs, made her look several years younger than her thirty-odd summers. Her prematurely grey hair added to her soft outlines, making her a pronounced Dresden type.

" I'm afraid . . . may I call you Rosemary ? " and continuing as she smiled assent, " I'm afraid you'll

think me unsophisticated when I tell you my views. Perhaps anti-sophisticated would better explain them. In the first place, this talk about marital love never lasting is all balderdash. A lot of these Bohemian chaps fritter their lives away running after different skirts with no intention of marrying. They have one light affair after another with women they would never choose for wives and never do choose unless forced to it. A man of that kind never gives himself a chance to know a woman worth loving. He steers away from marriage, and probably never will experience a real love. He isn't looking for it."

"What is real love?" smiled Rose.

"Oh, call me Bob."

"Well, what is it, Bob?"

A look of sadness came over Bob's fine face as he said:

"Rosemary, I had a real love for my wife, and she for me. She was a part of me—a dear little thing that nestled close to my heart. You've known of animals, haven't you, that grieved for their dead mates? Dogs that grieved for their masters? There's real love! Surely a man is capable of more love than a lower animal. Of course, there's physical attraction, but that's the ordinary, universal thing; its the soul and mind of the one beloved that differentiates that one from all others and makes her so dear one cannot bear to live without her." Bob almost whispered, lost in memories.

"I know what you mean, Bob. I felt the same about Mr. McClaren."

" Yes, I believe you did, Rosemary. You are the type who could love another deeply. Of course, many people are too selfish to know the meaning of love. They are not willing to serve any but their own appetites; they miss the best of life, and never learn that the fault is in their own make-up."

" It is funny, isn't it, that some people will not admit the existence of anything that they, themselves, have not experienced.

" Yes, but rather illogical. Of course, no one would think of desiring to marry a woman who did not attract one physically—that's so fundamental and ordinary that it can be taken for granted ; but it's the traits of soul and mind that make one carry out the thought and that excite the satisfying and lasting love. If that congeniality is missing, the physical attraction is not enough to defy time."

" I suppose," said Rose, " because physical attraction—shall we call it affinity ?—is so necessary, sometimes it is so great that it passes for the real thing, and carries them into matrimony, when there is no similiarity of soul or mind, and necessarily no similarity of tastes." There must be some ground for similarity of tastes, that's sure," Bob answered, " or they wouldn't be companionable nor find much worth doing together. One would be pulling one way, the other, another, and that's where divorce comes in."

" Well, if you set out, as many young people do, with a wrong lot of ideas about life, or with the philosophy which most of our best sellers give them, you're not apt to have happy marriages."

" No, I guess not. If you don't know good stuff

from bad, when you go marketing, you'll not make good purchases."

"Which amounts to saying," said Rose, "if you're looking for the right article, and know it when you see it, you're not apt to get the wrong one."

"And this brings us back to the dominance of soul and mind, doesn't it Rose?" and Bob smiled down at her.

"Yes, and still all these attractions are so intermingled that it's no wonder one sometimes overbalances the other, and unhappy marriages result. We're all prone to mistakes of judgment."

"Of course, Rose, but one can't go far wrong if attracted to a woman one knows to have a beautiful soul and fine mind," Bob said as he rose, and held out his hand to Mrs. McClaren. His eyes, which also had been taking a speaking part in their conversation, talked more loudly still as they lingered lovingly with hers. The contact of her hand in his seemed to silence all vocal speech.

Stella came in just as Bob Gray left, and asked Rosemary why she was smiling like Mona Lisa, but Rosemary just shook her head and continued to smile.

* * * * *

Stella and her niece, Alice, were evidently disagreeing. Alice looked disappointed. She sat on Stella's orchid counterpaned bed. One could look out of the Swiss draped windows over the blue waters of the Bay as far as the sky line. Stella sat in her little high-backed antique rocker upholstered in chintz with a *biscuit* ground sprayed with dainty pink roses.

" Oh, no, Alice, I couldn't let you go on a week-end trip with Angela Bolton's friends. I can't imagine their mothers allowing them to go to a house that has been locked up that way, and with no older woman with them."

The cars had stopped at the cottage to pick up Alice and Beatrice, but Stella would not let them go. There were three young couples in the cars, they were going to an unoccupied cottage at Dernisport belonging to a young married friend of Angela's. She had given her the key and invited her to use the house while she and her husband were in Europe. There were baskets of provisions—both dry and wet in the car. The young people were already at the too hilarious point when they had stopped for the girls.

" I'll tell you what we will do, Alice. We'll all drive over and call on them to-morrow," said Stella, keeping her surmises to herself, as she concluded : " Seeing is believing."

" Okay," said Alice, as her smiles returned.

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The next morning Stella and the two girls drove to Dernisport. They had their bathing suits with them and expected to join the group on the beach. No one answered the tooting of the auto horn, so they got out and rang the door bell. No one answered that. They tried the door and it was open. So they went into the living room. Laughter could be heard from upstairs, and to their ooh-hoos ! the answer, " Come on up !" Following the sounds they entered the front bedroom. The six young people were in their pyjama

suits, lolling about, some on the beds or lounge smoking cigarettes, and all of them more or less drunk. Stella's inquiry for Angela met with giggles and embarrassed glances toward a closed door. Mrs. Howard with hasty adieus made her retreat with a silent Alice and Beatrice following.

"Seeing is believing," she said as she started the engine.

It was not long after this episode that Angela and Jack Morton announced that they were married. The wedding took place at Mrs. Bolton's house. As Angela sat at the wedding feast, her eyes were heavy with too many cocktails, her head began to droop, her hair had become disarranged, an untidy wisp or two hung down. Her dissipation had drained her face of all natural colour, and the vivid rouge on her cheeks and lips stood out garishly making her a travesty of the innocence and winsomeness that might be looked for in a bride of her charms and youth. Many of the other young girls were replicas of the bride. Alice, Beatrice and a few who had not touched the liquor presented a contrast in their youth and beauty.

Mrs. Bolton kept nodding and giggling foolishly,—reiterating: "I'm drunk, children, dead drunk." No one denied it. A number of the older men and women were also in the same condition before the sauterne, flowing champagne and cordial were imbibed. The inebrated bride and bridesmaids were not able to shock them.

Stella and Mrs. McClaren would have liked to have got away but thought it best to stay on with Alice

and Beatrice, although the young people were all in one room, their elders in another as seemed the fashion.

When it was time for the departure of the bride and groom the latter was nowhere in sight but was finally found in the kitchen sound asleep on top of the flour bin. He was finally aroused to start on his honeymoon, which was to be at the Dernisport cottage. Rumours of a cat and dog existence filtered into the gossip that followed.

Later in the summer Beatrice said to Alice, as they lounged on the porch together :

" Mrs. Angela Morton's petulant little blonde face shows her discontent. The old romance ending of ' married and happy forever after ' does not apply to this bride."

" No it seems not," said Alice, " but anyone could see, she just used Jack. She never did love him."

" George Verner says her mother is practically supporting them. It's a good thing Angela's people have money."

" Absolutely ! " said Alice, irrelevantly, but *à-la-mode*. " When does she expect the baby ?"

" Lord knows, and He won't tell."

" I thought she knew all about birth-control !"

" Perhaps she did, it seems to work about as well as prohibition."

" Perhaps for the same reason."

" Ple-e-ease !"

Allen Tyler had returned again to the Cape. Stella and he had been driving toward Brewster. It was just at sundown. Allen stopped the car at the little

lake part way between Brewster and Harport, to watch the sunset. Its rosy glow had tinted all the white clouds and they were reflected in the water which looked solid and molten as mercury, reflecting clouds and trees. They sat and watched till the sun dipped behind the tallest tree-tops on the further bank.

Allen quoted one of his sonnets, comparing a late love to sunset revivifying a life. This appealed greatly to Stella's imagination. She wondered if Allen Tyler had experienced this great love coming late in life or if the poem was inspired by such a need, following out the opinion of some critics that most poetry is inspired by some obstruction to the gratification of one's desires. Her face took on something of this thoughtfulness as her eyes met Allen's expressive ones and he said :

" Now what are you thinking about ?"

" I was thinking what a wonderful lover you would make, Allen ; what a wonderful lover you must be to somebody. Surely there is a lady who inspired that lovely sonnet ?" she inquired laughingly.

" O, no, that's a very mistaken idea," he said. " Of course there may be a little something to it—but see how Browning has put himself into the personality of completely imaginary people."

" Yes," Stella said, " I can think of Ben Ezra and one or two others. But those were not love poems. It seems strange that you have never published those beautiful intimate poems of yours.

" I never have been interested in publicity and intimate poems of that sort one doesn't even care to read except to a friend, much less the public."

" Yes, I know," said Stella. " They are sort of out of fashion with the critics who taboo them along with all sentiment. But I love them."

" It is considered Victorian nowadays and there is a lot of twaddle published."

" How differently we think. Sometimes we do not seem to speak the same language."

" O come, it's not so bad as that, Stella," he said.

" Well you do not believe in sentiment and I do."

" That's putting it a little broadly. It can be overdone. Mother's day, father's day, and such things are just so much sugar to tickle the palate of the public."

" I admit," said Stella, " that it has been overdone. But that does not alter the true emotion that underlies the relationship and taboo all expression of it."

" You are romantic ; it suits you Stella, and makes me love you." he said, as he bent over her.

A delicious flush stole over her face at his sudden words. Her eyes were almost reproachful as she said :

" O, Allen, how can you make fun of sentiment and talk of love in the same breath."

" O, but—sentiment has nothing to do with the urge that draws me to you. It is an emotion that I feel—not what I think." He smiled. " Your eyes speak to me. Your lips make me wish to press mine against them. The softness of your skin and lovely curves of your body draw me to you and impel me to hold you close and taste the sweets which you so temptingly display."

His voice and his eyes reflected the ardor of his words and stirred a response in Stella as he drew her towards him and his lips brushed her cheek. The contact

was pleasing but Stella was surprised that there was an element of disappointment in it, a certain coldness that did not impel her to give her lips to him. His words had chilled her. Affection called for and caused physical attraction with her, she could not feel one without the other, and could not understand a physical love, that dispensed with the tenderness that delights in solicitude, service, and sympathetic understanding.

The laughter of the young folks and the staccato " Ple-e-ease !" of Beatrice's voice greeted Allen Tyler and Mrs. Howard on their return to the cottage. A rosy after-glow bathed the sky, sea, and sands and veranda in its warm light.

Beatrice was retailing the latest gossip about Angela Morton.

" Yes, believe it or not, she is already talking of divorce."

" She doesn't need the alimony does she, swee-e-tart ?" George Verner asked naïvely.

" Of course she doesn't, simple child, but she could spend more than her mother gives her."

" Gold-digger !" said Mortimer Evans with contempt.

" What grounds for divorce has she ?" asked Alice.

" Ple-e-ease ! I'd hate to tell you," said Beatrice, knowingly.

But none of them were bold enough to ask for disclosures. The fact was, Angela had gone home to her mother, shortly after her marriage. Young Morton had been really infatuated with her, and took it very hard, got drunk frequently and kept some very loose company, and although formerly decorous and well-behaved, he was piling up evidence pretty rapidly.

"Well, let's talk about something more profitable," said Alice.

"How about the party last night, swee-e-tart," said George.

"Some party, I'll say," said Mortimer.

"Ple-e-ease!" said Beatrice. "I don't blame Mr. Bolton for breaking up the party and letting the orchestra go. Why, the boys must have simply emptied quarts into that punchbowl. I couldn't count all the flasks I saw empty.

Mortimer said: "Yes, and it was a rank mixture when they got through with it, I'll say. You sure could smell alcohol."

"Well, when you begin to have to carry out the dead," George said, "I guess it's about time to call the undertaker."

"Ple-e-ease!" said Beatrice, "there must have been a barrel of bottles to cart away the next morning."

There had been a party the previous evening, given by Angela's father and mother for the young people, and they had all been there. George wandered in to the piano and struck a few resounding chords, and Mortimer jumped up, running his fingers through his hair, calling out:

"Oh boy, don't hit it again, don't hit it again!"

Discouraged, George got up from the piano and asked, "How about going to the movies, swee-e-tarts?" and they all filed out into the autos.

* * * * *

John Stone was back again to the Cape Cottage after his trip home to see his mother. He and Mrs. McClaren

had just returned from a tramp in a nearby pine woods. The day had been cool, and the breeze off the sea from the south-east, so the mosquitoes were driven to the north shore, and the odour of pine needles bathed in a sea breeze had been sufficient reward. They were both glowing from their exercise and glad to sit on the veranda in the comfortable willow chairs, with their springy cretonne covered cushions with pink and red roses on a blue background.

John Stone showed his age, Rose thought, involuntarily, as she contrasted his somewhat ascetic thin face with the younger and more genial Bob Gray's. John's gallantries, which were many, seemed artificial by contrast, and Rose felt rather regretful that their friendship was not as interesting as it had been.

"Rosemary," said John, frowning, "you don't seem the same to me. Somehow it is as if a barrier had been raised between us since I was here. Has something happened to change our friendship?"

"Why, what a notion, John," Rose said, obviously perturbed. "What makes you think that?"

"Well, I just can't say, but there is a something—your attention seems to wander. You seem to be lost in some sort of a reverie."

"You just imagine that. How is your mother?"

"Oh, mother's fine—seems to be younger every day. I took her for quite a long drive the other day and she stood it like a young girl."

"She dotes on you, doesn't she?"

"Yes, she does, but she likes you, Rosemary. She'd like to see you my wife."

" Oh, come, John, you know you don't half want to get married ; you have been so used to being a bachelor and leading a single life. Now tell the truth. You know you'd be happier without a wife around to interfere with the way you have been used to living. Do you think a bachelor really does make a happy married man ? "

" I don't know why not," John said briskly. " What different is he from any other man ? "

" Environment—habit is second nature. How can a man who has lived by himself as long as you have accustom himself to anyone who would be around as much as a wife ? "

John's face was quite red by this time—he was evidently not a little incensed by the query, partly because he knew that her implications were true. Many times he had thought the same thing in contemplating marriage and married life with Rose, if she would accept him. His life had got to be very much governed by routine. He went to bed fairly early ; his slumbers were undisturbed, and he himself had noticed of late that any incursions on his customary habits had caused an annoyance completely out of proportion. Perhaps this was why he answered Rose most vehemently with a breezy " Not at all ; not at all ! You know well I would love to have you as my wife. When I came down, I came to see you purposely to get a definite answer, and I am asking you again, " Will you marry me ? "

Rose looked rather pained, and he looked very glum as she said :

" I am sorry, John, but I still haven't any desire to get married. I love our friendship, but beyond that I cannot see. I wish I could."

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Malcolm Buhl had just arrived in his car from Pittsburgh. He had driven the 750 miles in two days. Stella, Alice and Mrs. McClaren were on the veranda as he drove in, and ran down to meet him.

After their hearty welcome he had produced a hamper from the car and gravely handed it to Stella.

" What is it ? " she asked.

" Don't open it until we are on the veranda," he said mysteriously. Everyone was curious by the time they reached the porch and opened the basket. Out jumped the tiniest of grey tiger kittens, and a little black-and-white Boston terrier not much bigger. The kitten immediately dashed away and ran up the side of the porch and ducked under a water pipe, where it stuck, until pulled out by main strength by Malcolm, and rescued by Stella. The pupils of its eyes were so elongated that they were eloquent with terror, but as Stella reassured it by gentle stroking, it cuddled closely to her with a less frightened look.

" No wonder it is terrified. Suppose you were chased by a lot of giants, how would you all feel ? " she said as she smoothed its soft fur.

Alice had taken possession of the pup, which had added its yelps to the kitten's meows, but now seemed quite happy with her.

" Where on earth did you get them, Malcolm ? " Mrs. McClaren asked.

"On the way," he answered. "I stopped at a kennels for the dog, and this kitten was so cute, it wasn't hard for me to be induced to take it, too." And, looking appreciatively at Stella, he said:

"I just knew you'd love it."

Stella smiled rather ruefully (as she had begun to think of the care of her acquisitions), but she said:

"Of course I love it. It's the cutest kitten I ever saw."

"What's the pup's name, Malcolm?" asked Alice.

"Oh, call him what you like—he's young enough yet."

"Call him Beauty," said Mrs. McClaren, "he's so prettily marked."

Just then he barked at James, the coloured butler, who carried out some lemonade.

"Better call him Nipper," said Stella, "he seems to be one."

"Okay," said Alice, "I like Nipper."

Beatrice and George Verner joined the rest on the porch, and catching sight of the menagerie, Beatrice emitted her customary "Ple-e-ease!" and George addressed everybody and company with "Hello, swee-e-tarts!"

* * * * *

Stella was glad Malcolm Buhl had come. Allen Tyler had gone home again, and she felt she had been thinking of him too much. He occupied her imagination and made such a good nucleus for dreams. Malcolm brought one down to earth, and left very little to the imagination. So she thought as she watched him

playing with the pup, when the others had gone into the cottage leaving them together on the porch. Malcolm always seemed on his tiptoes—and full of life. His actions were spontaneous and unlooked for. One never knew what would happen next when with him.

He jumped up and exclaimed:

"My, Stella, how sweet you are, let me look at you!" Standing above her he took her face in his hands and held it up to have a good look. Stella tingled to his vibrant touch, as he said:

"Gee! but you look good to me, girlie. Please may I?" and while she hesitated his lips met hers. The impact electrified them.

Stella was speechless. Malcolm drew back and said boyishly:

"Forgive me, Stella, for being so bold, but your lips tempted me so!"

Stella decided rapidly to "laugh it off." So she did, as she got her breath, and said:

"One never knows what you'll do next! Do sit down and behave yourself."

He did as she told him—but not in his chair; he sat beside her on the lounge.

"What a little hand you have, Stella!" he said, taking her hand and looking at it as if he'd never seen the like before.

Again that vibrant thrill. "What causes it?" thought Stella. Only yesterday she had read an article describing the talk of a noted physician who claimed that all life was electricity. At all events she could think of nothing more like an electric current as his

hand held hers. She was very still as she wondered if she produced the same effect upon him. He seemed absolutely unconscious of any unusual sensation, as he still held her hand and examined its smallness. Unlike herself, she did not try to withdraw it.

"Stella," he said, "couldn't you trust this hand in my keeping for life?"

Startled, she drew back with, "Malcolm, you surely do get serious all of a sudden. Why, you hardly know me. Stop your joking and drink your lemonade."

He did as he was told after he had said, seriously:

"Oh, as for that I am in dead earnest. And you'll find you can't laugh it off, either, beautiful lady."

But Stella did continue to try to laugh it off as she greeted his remark with another of her little laughs.

* * * * *

Mortimer Evans and George Verner had taken Alice and Beatrice to Nantucket in the airplane. It was only forty-five miles across Hyannis Bay, and they had intended to go and come right back again. They had been gone since early morning.

Stella and Mrs. McClaren, Bob Gray and Malcolm Buhl were all on the veranda scanning the sky, some of them with glasses, for a sight of the plane, and although the sky was quite clear, the plane was not to be seen.

"What could have happened to them?" said Stella, anxiously.

"There is not a particle of wind," said Mrs. McClaren.

"Oh, they'll be along soon," said Malcolm. "Don't worry."

Bob Gray said: "Oh, nothing to worry about on such a day. There isn't the hazard in flying there used to be."

But the afternoon had gone on and the dinner-hour passed and sundown; it became dark, and even later there was no sign of them. By this time everyone was worried and nervous.

Much telephoning had been done but no news had been gleaned. As the evening wore on and no word came, there was no thought of sleep. Most of the night was spent on the veranda. It was morning before Stella and Mrs. McClaren could be induced to take a little rest while Malcolm and Bob went to the telegraph office and wired:

"Nantucket, police headquarters:—Please forward c.o.d. any news of airplane party piloted by Mortimer Evans, Alice Britton, Beatrice Mayo and George Verner passengers."

They had hardly returned to Cape Cottage when the telephone rang and Malcolm took the following message:

"An airplane did arrive. Pilot fighting forest fire."
—Dept. Public Safety.

Consternation followed the news. Where were the girls, and in what danger might they be?

Bob Gray offered the *Victor* to take Stella and the others to Nantucket, and finally they all decided to go —Malcolm, Mrs. McClaren, Stella and Bob. It was already 6 a.m., and when they started for Young's Wharf, nearly an hour or so was spent in getting off. The day was beautiful, clear and calm, and the trip

would have been greatly enjoyed but for their fears and uncertainty as to the fate of the young people.

Malcolm and Bob did all they could to cheer the women, and the fact that there had not been an airplane accident was consoling. The salt air had a tang that made the sandwiches and coffee, served on board, taste delicious.

Rosemary also did her part to reassure Stella, who, now that they were on the way to the girls, felt no harm would come to them.

* * * * *

Alice, Beatrice, Mortimer and George Verner had made a safe landing and had gone up to the Sconset Hotel for luncheon. While they were eating, excited rumours of a forest fire had reached them, and indeed the strong smell of burning pine was very perceptible in the atmosphere.

They had nearly finished when an officer had come into the place and ordered every man to follow him and join the fire-fighters. The girls, in dismay, watched Mortimer and George go with the officer and the other men. They promised to wait at the hotel until the boys came back.

They had sat on the hotel veranda, not knowing exactly what to do. Alice pondered the possibilities of letting her Aunt Stella know of their delay, but Mortimer and George might be back directly. The odour of burning pine needles seemed to grow stronger, and smoke drifted to the south-east over the hotel, and was gaining in volume. The manager approached the girls, and, expressing his regrets, stated that he was

very sorry to have to tell them that the hotel was in danger, being right in the direction that the wind was blowing, and some sparks could be seen falling on the ground while he spoke. He advised the girls to seek a safer spot. Neither of them had thought of danger to themselves. The agitated hotel manager explained that he hadn't a moment to spare as there was so much for him to do he didn't know where to start. The girls joined the other excited guests who were leaving the premises. They had no idea where to go but followed some others.

* * * * *

Landing at the little dock, Malcolm, Bob, Stella and Rose found the place rather deserted. They soon learned that every able-bodied man was fighting the fire which travelled with the wind to the south-east. Clumps of pine trees in places showed the passage of the flames ; Stella and Rose were reminded of Southern Florida and the vicinity of Miami after a hurricane. Only charred trunks and branches, denuded of all foliage, remained, with a strong smell of burning wood in the atmosphere.

Malcolm proposed that they look up the police headquarters for information. This led them right into a noose. Very little attention was given to their inquiries by the excited officials ; but they at once commandeered Malcolm and Bob as fire-fighters, much to the discomfiture of Stella and Rose. They agreed on the *Victor*, at the docks, as a place for messages and meeting again, before the men left them.

Stella and Rose, left to themselves, hardly knew where to turn.

* * * * *

Alice and Beatrice had hurried along with the group of people whose main idea was to remove themselves from the fire area. Some of them whose houses had been burned were carrying part of their belongings; moving vans and other vehicles had carried away what could be saved in some cases. There is something about a fire that is very unnerving and productive of hysteria. Many of the women were sobbing, children were crying and screaming, excited tones and actions were general. The leaders headed toward the western end of the town, away from the fire area, which, before it was spent, covered over five hundred acres. So it happened that the Cape Codders were all heading in different directions.

* * * * *

George Verner and Mortimer were in the leading van of fire-fighters; tired, hot, dirty, and now that the novelty of the adventure had worn off, they were more than elated, after several hours of inhaling smoke, vigorous chopping and clearing ahead of the blaze, beating it out and throwing sand upon it, to learn that they would be off duty for the rest of the evening, but not so pleased to learn they were to report for further orders at the Snow Inn by 6 a.m. the following morning.

As soon as they were relieved, Mortimer proposed that they telephone the hotel where they had left Alice and Beatrice. They did this, only to find that the girls were not there, and the reason why. They hadn't an idea of where to look for them. It was twilight when

they found a restaurant, and quite dark when they emerged after getting something to eat. They planned to make a round of the hotels to inquire for the girls.

* * * * *

Alice and Beatrice became acquainted with a middle-aged woman, a Mrs. Butler, who introduced herself to them. It seemed she was a resident and property owner of Nantucket. Her home had been in the path of the fire, but she had a little cottage on the north shore, and was on her way there. Her mother lived with her, she said, and was at the cottage. She invited the girls to go there with her for the night, and she proposed that in the morning she would help them to find their friends. As it was getting dark the girls consented, and accepted her hospitable invitation, fearing the embarrassment of being away from home over-night and at the same hotel as the two boys. They planned to search for them in the morning.

* * * * *

Mortimer and George had joined their relay of fire-fighters at 6 a.m. after a restless few hours of sleep. They had spent the evening and most of the night in a weary and useless search for Alice and Beatrice.

They were more than ready to take the half-hour rest at noon-time after the laborious fire-fighting, while coffee and sandwiches were being distributed. They withdrew to the shade of some nearby sweet brier bushes, and were stretched out on the ground to rest when the voices of two men, the other side of the bushes, were heard. One said: "Her name is Alice. Gee, she's pretty!" The other voice said: "She called my girl Beatrice."

Hearing the familiar names the boys were now listening and had involuntarily sat up. The voice continued: "Did you put dope in that kid's liquor? I know you did—that was a hell of a trick!"

"Oh, can that! There ain't no kids who don't know the ropes now-a-days!"

"Well, I don't rob the cradle," said the first voice.

"Old dame Butler's house is no cradle," answered a sulky voice. "She told me to come back to-night and everything would be okay."

"How much did she want?"

"Twenty-five bucks!"

"I'll say you'd better steer clear, my boy. Those aren't no common girls if I know anything. She's decoyed them."

"That's her risk, not mine. I'm on, and will be on the North Shore to-night."

"She told me the same, but I said, 'Not me. You'd better watch your step, old gal, or you'll get in trouble. That Alice is a straight kid.'"

"I don't care whether she's straight or crooked. Bee-a-treece is a good little running mate."

A halloo called the fire-fighters back to work just as Mortimer and George came around the bushes to confront the two men; one was as dark as a gypsy, the other as blonde as a Swede. Catching sight of the boys, who were eyeing them suspiciously, they seemed in great haste to answer the call back to work. The boys ran after them, but they were out-distanced and unable to catch up with them, nor did they get sight of them again among their group of fire-fighters. They must have belonged to another corps.

* * * * *

Late in the afternoon Malcolm Buhl and Bob Gray were replaced by another relay of fire-fighters, and found themselves free to search for Stella and Mrs. McClaren. They hastened to the docks and the *Victor*, where they had agreed to look for messages. Reaching the boat, they found the captain, John Rodgers, aboard, but he had no word for them.

Not having an idea where to look first, Bob and Malcolm decided on a round-up of the hotels. As Nantucket Inn was the largest and best, they went there first to examine the hotel register, and were delighted to find Stella and Rosemary were registered. On inquiry, however, they were not found in their rooms. Deciding to return, they left a message that they would come back to the hotel later. Just as they were leaving, they ran into Mortimer Evans and George Verner. Their greetings were vociferous, questions tumbled over each other without time for answers. Having compared notes, they found them somewhat similar, as the boys had also been fire-fighters. The men were surprised and alarmed to learn that Mortimer and George did not know where to look for Alice and Beatrice, and much more so when the boys repeated the conversation of the two strange men. A list of the other hotels was secured from the clerk, but telephone calls failed to find the girls registered at any of them. As this was the second day spent by the boys in trying to find Alice and Beatrice, the aspect was disquieting. They were still discussing the matter in the hotel lobby, when Stella and Rosemary returned to the inn. Their adventures were soon told. They had been making

inquiries at police headquarters and searching elsewhere, but without results.

* * * * *

Alice and Beatrice became somewhat uneasy after accepting the invitation of Mrs. Butler. The latter had taken them to a side street where she had her car parked. It was a new Ford. As the girls sat in the back seat and were driven along country roads, they looked anxiously at each other as it grew quite dark.

After what seemed many miles they turned into a narrow shore road, and through many windings reached a cottage above the beach, flanked at the back and sides by many pine trees. The fragrance of the fallen needles that carpeted the ground was pungent as they drove in at the back of the house.

It was pitch dark, and the girls had grown very nervous during the silent drive and began to question the wisdom of having accepted an invitation without knowing their hostess better. Mrs. Butler seemed absorbed in her driving, with its winding turns. The girls clung to each other as they went with her into the house. She let herself in with a key. They followed her into the glare of a brightly-lighted room, which seemed full of people, men and women, all of whom greeted Mrs. Butler hilariously. There were three girls in light silk pyjama suits, and several men, mostly in sport clothes, with golf knickers and hose. Dance music was on the radio, and the three couples continued the dancing which the newcomers had interrupted. Mrs. Butler introduced Alice and Beatrice to a Mr. Brown and a Mr. Smith, men of about thirty, dressed in golf suits. The former was heavily tanned and very

dark looking, the latter blonde and athletic, a Swedish type. They immediately whisked the girls into a one step. After several turns, the dancers were asked by the radio to " Please stand by," and Mr. Brown said, " Let's have something to drink, what ho ? " addressing Mrs. Butler. She nodded and withdrew, presently returning with a tray containing a bottle of rye, one of scotch, ginger ale and white rock.

Alice was surprised to see Mr. Brown slip Mrs. Butler a $20.00 bill which was received without comment. The girls took ginger ale, although everyone pressed them to have something with it ; but Alice had pinched Beatrice and said, under her breath, " Don't take it."

As the evening advanced the people became louder in their hilarity. Several couples left the large living room. Mr. Brown and Mr. Smith devoted their attention to Alice and Beatrice. The sun-parlour, lighted by only one heavily-shaded lamp, adjoined the living room. Mr. Brown had manœuvred Alice to the couch at the far end of the room after the dance. He was a black-haired man of about thirty, with keen, glittering, dark eyes, rather good-looking, if you liked the gypsy type.

He immediately put his arm about Alice, but she removed it with the " laugh it off " sophisticated manner, in vogue with flappers who pride themselves on being equal to any situation. Alice found herself more than busy applying her ideas of what to do in such a case. After " laughing off " several more attempts at loving familiarity, she jumped up suddenly and said in her most unconscious manner, " Really, I'm dead tired. I must get Beatrice and retire."

Hurrying into the living-room she found Beatrice almost asleep on Mr. Smith's shoulder.

She jumped up at Alice's startled cry of " Beatrice ! " Alice grasped her by the arm and, leading her hastily to the door, said, " We must say good-night," and almost pushed and pulled Beatrice, dragging her from Mr. Smith, who tried to hold on to her, out of the room and up the stairs, calling " Mrs. Butler ! Mrs. Butler ! " in a frightened voice as she led and dragged Beatrice, who seemed stupid with sleep, up the stairs, leaving the two men gaping with amazement, at the foot of the stairs. The sight of Beatrice, almost asleep, had scattered her " laugh it off pose " to the winds, and it was the voice of a frightened child, without any pose at all, that now almost screamed " Mrs. Butler ! Mrs. Butler ! "

That lady, looking annoyed and alarmed, with a " What is it, my dears ? " met the girls at the top of the stairs.

" Oh, we're very tired, we must get to bed," said Alice, now almost crying.

" Of course," Mrs. Butler said. " I'll take you to your rooms."

Arriving at a door, she said, " You take this room, Miss Britton, and Miss Mayo can be right across the hall here."

" Oh, no, Beatrice and I will sleep together, thank you," she said, as she pulled Beatrice, still dazed, into the room indicated.

Mrs. Butler looked her surprise, and Alice said, " Good-night, and thank you so much," as she quickly closed the door, and looked for the key to turn it in

the lock, but there was no key. Beatrice now almost asleep, sank into an arm chair.

Alice shook her and tried to arouse her, but she seemed to be in a stupour. So crying with fright Alice got her into the nearest of the single beds, where she at once fell into a dead sleep. The girls had not intended to be away over night, and had no night clothes with them. They had worn little dark silk sport dresses with coats and hats of the same material.

In answer to a knock, Alice found Mrs. Butler at the door with two pyjama suits for their use.

She said, " I thought you might be able to use these," and added " sleep in the morning, we have breakfast late, and I will call you."

Alice thanked her and bade her good-night, got into the pyjamas but left Beatrice sleeping. Alice was so played out after her exciting day that she fell asleep at once. She awakened when it was daylight, sat up in bed, and looking at the other bed ejaculated a frightened " Oh !" Beatrice was gone.

Alice ran to the door and turned the knob ; but the door did not open. It had been locked. Then she ran to the window. It overlooked a white beach. It was low tide, and many sand bars were visible.

There was no way of getting out of the room except from the windows which were very high and if she jumped she would be injured. She decided that she would knock on the door, and ask for an explanation of why she was locked in the room. With much trepidation she knocked, and after a very short interval Mrs. Butler's voice was heard saying, " O, good morning !"

" Good morning," answered Alice. " Will you

please open the door ?" But the key was already in the lock, and Mrs. Butler said very cheerily :

" Did you miss Beatrice ?"

" Why yes, where is she ?"

" Didn't you know ? She got very, very ill during the night and went out to the bath room and you were sleeping so soundly I thought it better not to disturb you, so I gave her the room across the hall. She is still sleeping. Wouldn't you like some breakfast in your room ? I just told Annette to bring up some coffee for you. She is bringing it up right now. We will put it on this little tea table here."

" Hadn't I better get Beatrice ?" said Alice.

" My dear, I wouldn't disturb her. I think it would be better for her to sleep. Let us peep in—you don't need to dress, just come across the hall."

With this Mrs. Butler led the way across the hall, opened the door and looked in. Beatrice was sleeping very heavily, seemingly undisturbed by them. So with her finger on her lips, Mrs. Butler tiptoed back to the room, followed by Alice.

Alice's fears were somewhat allayed but she still wondered why the key had been turned in her door.

" Why did you lock my door on the outside, Mrs. Butler ?"

" Was it locked on the outside ?" How stupid of me ! I found the key on the floor and put it in the door and must have turned it accidentally. Let us have our breakfast now. I haven't had mine either. We can have it together and plan out how you are to find your friends."

Alice's fears had been somewhat allayed by this

time and she thought after all that she had been unduly alarmed and that Beatrice likely had been induced to take a high-ball, perhaps the stuff was not very good and it had made her sick. She felt worried about her.

She said: "Well Mrs. Butler you have been very kind to us. You have been good to have us this way, but I would like very much to get in connection with some friends this morning."

"Do you know where to call them up?" said Mrs. Butler.

"'No," said Alice, "I don't know. We flew here in an airplane from Harport and the boys were at once commandeered as fire-fighters. They took us to the hotel where we had luncheon, but we did not stay there. I thought Beatrice and I might go to police headquarters and we might be able to find out where the boys are."

"O, maybe that would be a good idea," said Mrs. Butler. "But you know if they are fire-fighting they will be on duty from six this morning until late in the afternoon, and you have plenty of time before they would be at liberty."

"I'll tell you what we'll do. Some time after luncheon I'll get the car and I'll drive you and Beatrice over to the police station and we will make enquiries."

"Well that would be a good plan," said Alice. I cannot think of anything else better to do.

Mrs. Butler said, "We will wait until Beatrice wakes up. I have an awfully good story here, 'WINTERSMOON' by Hugh Walpole. Have you read it?"

"No, I haven't," said Alice.

"I'll tell you what we will do. We'll go down on the porch and you can read your book until Beatrice wakes up. That will help fill in the time. Wouldn't you like to come down on the beach and have a dip?"

"It is a little cold. I think I would rather read the book."

So Alice went down to the porch where she could see the breakers as they dashed on the sand, and was soon immersed in Mr. Walpole's story.

At one o'clock Mrs. Butler announced luncheon, and Beatrice had not awakened yet, so Alice was worried about her, which prevented her from entering very enthusiastically into the chatty remarks of Mrs. Butler.

"I believe after luncheon I am going to try to get Beatrice up. It isn't natural for her to be sleeping like that."

"Would that be wise, do you think? You know she was up most of the night, and didn't want to disturb you, but she was very nauseated. It was six o'clock before she got to sleep."

"But we will have to get her up soon if she's to go with us to look for the boys."

"Well, suppose we say we will call her in an hour or so," said Mrs. Butler. "How is your book?"

"Oh, it's a very nice story if I wasn't so worried about being away from home and anxious about Beatrice. I just feel as if we should do something and do it right away. Couldn't I wire to my aunt at Harport?"

"Yes, we could do that, but I think it would be better to step into the telegraph office when we get over to the Centre."

"All right, we'll do that," said Alice.

"Well, you had better read for another hour or two, and then we will get ready and go into town."

So Alice tried to get her mind on her book, but she could not overcome the feeling of disquiet she had, and at about two o'clock went upstairs and again tried to arouse Beatrice. She shook her and finally got her awake, but the girl was desperately ill. She seemed to be nauseated continually. It was out of the question for her to go to town with Alice, and Alice was afraid to leave her. But Mrs. Butler and she had a busy couple of hours in looking after the girl, and were only too glad to have her sleep again.

Alice's uneasiness increased as the day wore on, and what she had thought a vivacious, pleasant manner in Mrs. Butler began to take on a tang of insincerity. Mrs. Butler's eyes had a sort of piercing sharpness as they rested upon her, but had a certain shiftiness, when their eyes met, that was disquieting. Alice's distrust of the woman seemed to grow by leaps and bounds. With Beatrice so ill that she couldn't leave her, she was really getting into a panic, and frequently tears came to her eyes, and it was all she could do to keep from giving way to hysteria.

Her disquiet grew as the hours went by and evening approached. She sat at the window in Beatrice's room looking out into the pine woods at the back of the house.

The dinner hour passed and Mrs. Butler had proposed that a tray be sent into the room, so that she would not have to leave Beatrice.

A taxicab drove up, and the two men they had met the evening before, stepped out, the dark, swarthy man

who looked like a gypsy and the blonde one who looked like a Swede. The door-bell rang, and voices could be heard in the hall. Shortly after, Mrs. Butler appeared in the doorway with Mr. Brown and Mr. Smith following her.

"Alice," she said, "the boys are so sorry that Beatrice is sick. They are sorry for you, dearie, and wonder if they cannot do anything to assist you in finding your friends. They are so anxious to assist you."

Alice brightened at this and said, "Oh, thank you, that would be fine. We had thought of inquiring at the police headquarters and leaving a message for our friends."

"I could do that for you," said Mr. Brown. "I would be glad to. Couldn't you come with me—we could both go over."

"That would be great," said Alice, "but I hate to leave Beatrice when she's so sick."

"Oh, I'll stay with her," said Mrs. Butler. "I'll look after her. She will be all right. You'll be back in an hour or so."

"I believe I will," said Alice.

"Take my car," said Mrs. Butler. "Mr. Brown can drive it."

Alice and Mr. Brown left to go to police headquarters.

When they had gone Mrs. Butler turned angrily to Mr. Smith and said:

"What in heaven's name did you put in that girl's liquor? We are very lucky if she doesn't die on our hands. She's been like this all night and all day."

"Oh, go on," said Smith. "You'd think she was an angel."

"If anything happens to this girl you'll have a hard time explaining."

"I?" he said. "She isn't my funeral."

"Well, you'll see whether she is, if anything happens to her."

"Oh, hell," he said, "she'll sleep it off."

"What did you give her?"

"Nuthin'."

"Why, you must have. She's been so sick."

"Heck, I just dropped some cigarette ashes in the ginger ale."

"Well, you've done it this time. We can't get her awake."

"I'll wake her up if you give me a chance."

"You'll wake up in the electric chair if you don't watch out."

"Oh, give her a drink of whisky. She'll be all right. What did I give you the twenty-five bucks for?" he said threateningly.

"You clear out of this place as fast as you can."

"Like hell I will. The girl belongs to me, I paid for her," he said threateningly, as he came toward Mrs. Butler, glowering at her.

"Get to hell out of here," she screamed, as she backed away from him. He lunged toward her and shoved her out of the room forcibly and locked the door on her.

* * * * *

Malcolm Buhl and Bob Gray were much disturbed and very grave after Mortimer Evans and George Verner had excitedly repeated the conversation that they had

overheard between the two fire-fighters. They hardly knew how to proceed, and were somewhat embarrassed about discussing the matter with Alice's aunt, Mrs. Howard. They finally decided that they had better tell her about it.

Mrs. Howard and Mrs. McClaren had just returned to the room, and noticing the worried look of the men, Mrs. McClaren had asked:

"Well, what is the matter? You look as if you had heard some terrible news. Have you heard anything about the girls?"

"Yes, we have," said Malcolm reluctantly.

"Oh, what is it?" exclaimed Stella, in alarm.

"Don't keep us in suspense," said Rosemary.

Both of them looked very much frightened and agitated. Malcolm decided that the only thing to do was to take the women into their confidence. So they told them what the boys had overheard. Stella was so frightened that she became faint, but forced herself to the control necessary to meet the situation.

"What shall we do?" she asked.

Of course nobody knew exactly what to do. Bob Gray said:

"I wonder where we could inquire of the location of this Mrs. Butler. The boys said 'on the North Shore.'"

"Let us look for the name in the telephone book," said Malcolm. Bob Gray got a telephone book. The name was looked up and there was a Mrs. John Butler on the North Shore, and only one Mrs. Butler; so if the woman had given her right name this might be she.

"Well, what had we better do?" asked Bob Gray.

"Oh, let us go after them," said Stella.

"Oh, yes, we must," said Rosemary.

"Had we better all go?" said Malcolm. "How about Bob and me going alone?"

"Oh, no, we must go," said Stella, and Rosemary acquiesced.

"Well, I'll get a large car," said Malcolm. "But you boys had better wait here at the hotel till we come back."

They finally got started, and it was not difficult to find the North Shore. Having arrived there an inquiry at the gas station divulged that a Mrs. Butler had a house on the North Beach, and they were directed to it. They drove up to the place with pine trees at the back of the house. It was still daylight, as the days were at their longest, and not dark until nine o'clock.

"You stay in the car," said Malcolm to the two women. "We'll get out."

* * * * *

Loud talking could be heard within, and as the men walked toward the back of the house, the voices seemed to be right over them coming out of the window of an upstairs room. The strident, frightened tones of a woman screaming, "Get to hell out of here," were heard.

The men in alarm ran around to the front of the house, knocked on the door and rang the bell. The door was quickly opened by a middle-aged woman who looked quite white and frightened.

Malcolm Buhl said, "We have come here for Miss Britton and Miss Mayo."

"I don't know anything about them," said the woman.

" Oh yes you do," said Malcolm, firmly, " and you'll get yourself into a great deal of trouble if you don't help us to find these girls."

The woman was evidently agitated, and almost shaking with fright.

Bob Gray spoke in a peremptory manner :

" Where are the girls ? "

Mrs. Butler had before this concluded that she was getting into dangerous waters in trying to detain the two girls, and after her violent episode with Mr. Smith her fears had increased very greatly, and she began to think that she was getting herself into a great deal of trouble. She also feared for Beatrice (she had not been able to protect her from the Swede). So she quickly decided to come clear.

" Miss Mayo is upstairs now," she said.

" Take us to her at once," said Malcolm.

She led the way up the stairs and to the door which the Swede had shut in her face. The voice of a man inside the room could be heard saying :

" Come on, Beatrice, that's a good girl, drink this whisky. It'll make you feel better. Come on ! Come on ! Come on, sit up, little girl, just drink a little bit of this. Come on, you'll be all right. Here, dearie, drink this."

A slight moan from Beatrice.

Malcolm seized the door, turning the knob, shouted :

" Open this door ! "

No sound being heard from inside, he repeated, " Open this door." He tried to turn the knob of the door, but, finding it locked, he banged on the door with his fists and kept repeating : " Open the door !

Open the door!" No answer being received from within, he said:

"Let us force the door, Bob."

The two men braced their shoulders against the door, which was lightly built, as in the case of most beach cottages. It gave with a crash, and the two men were almost spilled into the room.

Beatrice lay on the bed in her little silk dress, still stupefied, in a half-reclining pose bolstered up on the pillows. The Swede was over by a window. He had drawn up the sash and was evidently contemplating a jump when confronted by the two men and Mrs. Butler in the background.

Malcolm said: "What are you doing in this room?"

The fellow was livid (coward that he was) as he leered at Mrs. Butler and said:

"Ask her—it's her house."

She commenced to cry and wring her hands, and said:

"I told him to get out of the place and he pushed me out of the room and locked the door. It isn't my fault—I told him to get out," she repeated.

"Oh yes, you did. But you took my twenty-five bucks, didn't you?"

Malcolm Buhl sprang at him and landed a blow on his chin which sent him sprawling on the floor, followed it up with a kick and

"Get out of here as fast as you can get!"

The man was abject, showed his yellow colour, and was now cringing when he had to deal with men. Malcolm and Bob assisted him out and down the stairs with the toes of their shoes.

Coming back to the room they confronted a crying woman. Malcolm said to her sternly: "Now you get your wits together. This has got to be cleared up and these girls looked after. What is the matter with Miss Mayo that she is in this stupor?"

The woman, crying, answered, "Oh, I don't know, but he said he put some ashes in her ginger ale—some cigarette ashes, to make her dopey. She's dopey from the cigarette ashes."

Bob Gray said: "Where is Miss Britton?"

"She went over to inquire for her friends at police headquarters with a Mr. Brown."

"How did they go," said Bob.

"They went in my car."

Just then a car could be heard driving into the place, and almost a moment after Alice and Mr. Brown could be heard running up the stairs, and appeared at the door of the room.

Alice, catching sight of Malcolm and Bob, ran to them with joy, crying: "Mr. Buhl! Oh, Mr. Gray!" and threw her arms around Malcolm's neck and said: "Oh, I'm so glad you've come! I am so glad you've come! We have just been to the headquarters and couldn't find out anything about Mortimer and George. And I didn't know what to do," she sobbed. "Oh, I am so glad you are here! Beatrice is so sick and I didn't know what to do."

"Well, don't cry, dear, you are all right now. We will take care of you. You will be all right. Your Aunt Stella is here, out in the car, and Mrs. McClaren is with her. We will take you girls back to the hotel right away. You'll be all right! you'll be all right!

You run down and get into the car. They are downstairs now, and we will carry Beatrice. You run along now, and we will bring her."

Alice needed no further urging and ran to the car.

Malcolm went over to the bed and, lifting Beatrice, carried her to the car. Bob Gray went ahead, and the frightened Mrs. Butler tagged on behind, shutting the door after them as they went out.

Stella and Rosemary were calming Alice, who was almost hysterical at the sight of them, and soothing her with affectionate terms. Beatrice was still stupefied as they put her into the car beside Mrs. McClaren on the back seat, where she put her arms around the girl lovingly, as her head rested on Rosemary's shoulder.

Alice and Stella took the small seats. The men were in the front, and they drove away without glancing back at the place. During the drive the fresh air seemed to revive Beatrice some, so by the time they reached the hotel she was able, with a little assistance, to walk to their rooms.

Having reached that port of safety they undressed Beatrice and got her into bed. She seemed better, able to sit propped up on pillows and take part in Alice's account of their adventure. After having heard Alice's side of the story, Malcolm and Bob Gray went to look for Mortimer and George Verner, who were awaiting their return.

Bob Gray said: "I wonder if we ought to do anything about having that man and woman arrested?"

After a pause, Malcolm said: "What about the publicity?"

"Well, that's right," said Gray, "that would be awkward."

"Yes, mighty awkward, and I think we would better let it go by. Publicity of that kind wouldn't do the girls any good."

The boys were waiting for them in the foyer of the hotel. Malcolm said: "The girls are all right, boys, we found them. They are upstairs with Mrs. Howard and Mrs. McClaren. Beatrice hasn't been feeling very well, but she will be all right in the morning. So you boys better go to your hotel now and get a little sleep, and come over to-morrow morning. We will plan what we are going to do then.

The boys had been very much agitated and upset by their experience, and their fruitless search for the girls added to their unusual exertions of fire-fighting. They were both quite worn out and bedraggled-looking. The good news had brightened them up perceptibly. They were very much relieved and quite willing to get a good night's sleep. After Malcolm and Bob had called up Stella's room, and found that Beatrice was recovering, they decided to also retire for the night.

* * * * *

Alice had told her aunt of their adventures since landing at Nantucket. She told breathlessly of their meeting Mrs. Butler, that they were nervous and frightened about having to be away over-night in the company of the two boys, Mortimer Evans and George Verner, that when Mrs. Butler had seemed so nice, and invited them to stay at her cottage over-night, they had thought that would be a good thing to do, that they could easily find the boys in the morning, as the

day before they couldn't stay at the hotel where the boys had left them on account of the hotel being in the path of the fire, and they had thought it was the wisest thing to do. And then Alice told how they had not liked the looks of the place when they got there, nor the men they were introduced to, although the dark one, Mr. Brown, had seemed to be all right, but just a common fellow, not very well educated, but he seemed to be decent enough. He hadn't acted ungentlemanly with Alice when he had taken her over to headquarters to look for their friends. He seemed to be really very sorry she was worried so, and had done everything he could to help her find the boys. But the officers they had spoken to at headquarters had not been able to give them any information at all. Brown had taken her back to Mrs. Butler's cottage, and had said he would be at her service to help them both in any way that he could; in fact, he has proposed that he and Alice go upstairs and get Beatrice, and that he would take the two girls to some hotel where they could get a room. He had told Alice that he thought it would be best for her to do that, as he didn't know what kind of a woman Mrs. Butler was, and that she had better get herself and her friends out of the place. He offered to help her do this, and he said that they would go back to the cottage and get Beatrice, and that was what they were planning to do when she had come back. He had told her that the Swede was no good, and not to be trusted, and the quicker they got Beatrice away from that place the better.

Alice said: "When I saw Malcolm and Bob I was so relieved that I went to pieces—cried like a baby."

" I don't wonder," said Stella. " You girls certainly have had a lucky escape from what might have been a terrible situation."

Beatrice's mind was almost a blank as to what she had gone through. She just knew that she had been awfully sick and that she was beginning to feel better.

" Just imagine how I felt when I found the door locked, Aunt Stella, and Beatrice gone. But Mrs. Butler really almost made me believe her when she said she had locked the door by mistake."

Mrs. McClaren said : " Well, there is no telling what might have happened to you girls if we hadn't been able to find you. It was providential that the boys overheard the men speaking, to give us a clue as to where to look for you."

Stella said : " We would not have had an idea where to look for you if it weren't for that. It certainly was a good thing they overheard those two men. Goodness only knows what might have happened to both of you in that place."

Everyone was worn out, so they determined to get a good night's sleep and leave plans for their return to Harport until the next day.

* * * * *

Stella, Rosemary McClaren and the girls had returned to Harport with Malcolm Buhl and Bob Gray on the *Victor*, the day after the girls were found. The forest fire continued five days before it was totally extinguished, but it was well under control the fourth day, so the men were able to get away, and Mortimer Evans and George Verner were to fly over the Bay the following day.

John Stone was at the cottage when they arrived. He had motored in from his Jersey home. The Nantucket experiences served as a subject of conversation for many days—at least the forest fire part, but Stella had a conference with Alice and Beatrice and the boys, after their return, and it was decided that there were many good reasons why the unhappy episode at Mrs. Butler's should be a tabooed subject. The newspapers frequently record unexplained disappearances of young girls. One reason that such crimes go unpunished is the ugly effect of such publicity. It takes only a whiff of the hot breath of scandal to scorch the aura that makes a young girl's reputation.

* * * * *

Malcolm Buhl has returned to business and Pittsburgh. John Stone was spending two weeks at Cape Cottage. He had always been a speculator, and Stella and Rosemary frequently consulted him as to their investments. They had found his advice good. Their incomes were provided for by the wise investments of their former husbands, chiefly in high-class bonds or preferred stocks, paying conservative but dependable dividends, but even such are frequently "called," and the need arises for reinvestments,—a serious matter for Stella and Rosemary, who made no pretence of being financiers. The advice given them by John Stone, in the winter of 1928-1929, had been very productive; so much so that they had been led for the first time to make investments of a more speculative nature, and had bought some common stock. With his advice they had sold on a big rise and cleared a large amount. They were quite delighted with their earnings, and considered

John Stone a king of finance, and his advice golden. Stella and Rosemary were glad of his visit at this time, as several blocks of their bonds had been called, and they both had considerable amounts for re-investment.

Bob Gray had been very busy on his return to Harport, with guests, entertaining them on the *Victor*. He and John Stone were not very congenial. John evinced a certain jealousy of Bob, that inclined the latter to avoid his company, so Stella and Rosemary saw a great deal of John on this visit, and spent most of their time discussing stocks.

John was particularly enthusiastic about O W X common, an oil stock. Stella had already reinvested in common stock of several varieties, and she was a little uneasy about putting so large an amount as had now been released by some preferred stock which had just been "called"; but John Stone was intensely enthusiastic about the oil stock, which, he assured them, they could depend on him to sell at the right moment. Their earnings of the previous month had given the women great faith in his judgment, so both of them bought to the limit. This was much greater in Stella's case, as it happened the amount she could command at the moment was quite a sum; in fact the bulk of her investments had been in Standard Oil, Aluminium and Hoboken bonds, all of which had recently been called. Under John's tutelage she had been buying common stock which he had sold for her at the propitious moment. She was almost a hundred thousand dollars ahead of the game through his manipulations, and consequently had great faith in his advice.

She instructed him to buy O W X. Rosemary invested a smaller amount, as she had less at the time at her command, but she hoped to invest a larger sum later when it would be released. Both of the women were very comfortably fixed financially, but it looked as if John Stone would make millionaires of them.

Rosemary was glad to have financies bulk large in her conversations with John, as it kept him from waxing too sentimental, and his love-making grew daily more distasteful to her.

* * * * *

Ple-e-ease and Swee-e-tart had been getting more mooney as summer progressed, and had deserted the more prosey Alice and Mortimer, who did not seem to be sentimentally inclined. They had imbibed the spirit of the day which expressed its feelings with a quirk, a move or a tongue in the cheek, anything to deny seriousness of purpose or sentimentality. Alice and Mortimer played this game to perfection. They had been more or less inseparable during the summer months. After the Nantucket experience Mortimer had been given a place in his father's Boston Department Store, with a chance to rise as he learned the business. It was only ninety miles from Harport, but even an airplane or auto could not give them the carefree hours of the past summer time. Alice found that she missed Mortimer. He had made her a promise to write, but he was a miserable correspondent, and his letters were worse than none. The badinage they had carried on could not be transferred to paper. Absence does not "make the heart grow fonder," but it had cut off their companionship, and made them realise

that they had grown used to it. They missed each other. Alice was a little dreamy these days, and haunted the post office. It was regulated without regard to the increased summer population, who were obliged to wait, curb-deep, outside the closed window while the postmaster and his assistant sorted the letters or read the post-cards. And when the letter was finally opened, nearly everything in it, expressed in the facetious humour of the day, which disdains to say what it means, and says the opposite, could be interpreted to have several different meanings without the accent, raised eyebrow or pursed lip that had to be recalled or imagined to explain it. After ten days of correspondence, mostly in untangling misunderstanding that became more labyrinthine, with the explanations interpreted with various meanings, Alice was beginning to have nerves, and look a little peaked when Mortimer's car finally drove in for a week-end visit.

Her "Hello, Buddy Boy!" had a little quaver in it, and she rather thrilled at the taut arm around her waist as they found the seclusion of the veranda. The warm light in her violet eyes was returned by the glow in his, as he quickly snatched her to him and pressed his lips to hers. Their boy and girl comaraderie flew away with the contact—the man had discovered his woman.

* * * * *

Allen Tyler blew in from his mountains some time before John Stone left for home. As Stella's stock transactions were over for the time being, Allen made a fine fourth for their outings and evening game of

auction. John Stone was teaching them " contract," and they all enjoyed it.

Allen and Stella found many occasions for téte-à-têtes. The drives were glorious in the twilight that lasted until nine o'clock of the long summer day. They watched the sun set over the beautiful little lakes on the way to Brewster, then swinging around the circle of Chatham Bars, they reached the wide vista of sea, just as the last rays of daylight lingered over the waters, and then came home skirting the little lakes between Chatham and Harport.

Allen stopped the car as they reached one of the Chatham Bays, one of the beautiful land-locked inlets that skirt the Bars. The sea reflected the rosy glow of the luminous sunset clouds. The roses were thick as they climbed in profusion over the hedges and porches of the simple Cape Cod houses. The whole was a delightful picture, and the tang of the sea breeze was exhilarating and filled one with *joie de vivre.*

Allen said : " Stella, I have a beautiful dream of you and me sailing over the sea to distant lands, seeing historic places together, and tasting of the joys of our ideal companionship. Would you like that ? "

Stella's face lit up with pleasure as she said, " That is a lovely dream, Allen. Do you think you could make it come true ? I——I know I could."

" I know you could make it come true for me, Stella. But I am not so sure of my own powers to charm."

" Oh, you are very modest, Allen," and Stella smiled at him.

" A life untrammelled by conventions, independent as we both are financially, unhampered by relations,

our similarity of tastes, love of higher things, art, literature, music, we could make a glorious adventure of life, Stella," he said, as he smiled lovingly down into her eyes.

"Allen, I know that I could return your love—but somehow I do not feel so sure that you have a great love for me."

"Sweetheart, you know I love you."

"Yes, but how? Do you feel that I am necessary to you? Do you feel that your love would last?"

Allen laughed. "Why bother about that, sweetheart? Why ask anything beyond to-day? Who can answer for to-morrow?"—waving his hand at the trailing vines of roses. "Can we not enjoy these roses to-day, even though they may not be here to-morrow?"

"Oh, Allen," and a troubled look came over her sweet face, "I don't quite understand your viewpoint. I am afraid that we do not talk the same language. Love that is transitory, that you expect to be transitory, has no charms for me. To me constancy is the first attribute of love—real love."

"Why get so analytic, Stella? Analysis drives away romance and brings it into the element of the head and the brain. Now my idea of love has to do with the emotions—what one feels. I do not have to analyse it; I know what I feel and what I want. And I know that I want you more than any woman in this world," he said, as he drew Stella toward him, and, as had happened before, there was a something that held Stella from surrender. Allen's love appealed to her imagination—almost carried her off of her feet, but

back of it all she had this feeling of uncertainty and doubt as to its true quality.

"Now what makes you look so troubled, Stella? Can't you drop some of the Puritanical notions that you have absorbed which so confuse your ideas of love and marriage."

"Oh, Allen, I could never consider love without marriage."

"Why not? We are not children. Don't be provincial. Why trammel ourselves with conventions?"

Stella said, almost inaudibly, as tears gathered in her eyes at the shattering of one more beautiful illusion, "I never have, and never could, belong to any man but my husband."

The sun had set, the shadows were falling fast, the beauty of the day was gone. Allen's last words had chilled Stella. They did not speak the same language. Allen could feel that after his words Stella had drifted from him. She seemed as far off as one of the little cirrus clouds floating in the sky over the sea. In vain he tried to get back to the *comeraderie* of the earlier hours. Something had come between them and the rest of the drive was finished almost in silence.

* * * * *

Alice and Beatrice were driving home from Chatham Bars one day, with Alice at the wheel. Right ahead of them a rickety Ford ambled. As they came to a road turning sharply to the north, it suddenly veered northward, moving so slowly, as it turned, that Alice's quick application of the brakes did not prevent a

collision. A short time after this the girls received a subpœna to appear in the local court.

The court room was in a business block of the main street of Harport. The judge held court two days a week. It was necessary for Alice to employ a lawyer for her defence. In the course of the trial, he questioned the owner of the Ford, and cleverly and clearly brought out that he was a Cape Codder and resident of Harport. He looked the part. He was tall and gaunt, spoke with a twang, was slightly deaf and had a large goiter that gave him a pouter-pigeon effect. The queries made it clear that he had made the turn without giving any indication, such as putting his hand out, to show that he was going to turn. Also that he had been moving very slowly, and that a car going at the ordinary rate of twenty-five to thirty miles, which is the legal rate on the highway, could not help hitting him.

Beatrice was questioned, and when asked how far the cars were apart when they first noticed the Ford, and at what rate Alice was driving, answered, " Oh, about fifty feet, and thirty miles an hour." The opposing counsel asked her to look out of the window and indicate in some way what she considered fifty feet. When she indicated a tree outside the window which was nearer to two hundred feet away, she got a good laugh from the spectators. The lawyer remarked that if her ideas of speed were not more accurate than those of distance, they would not be of much value as evidence.

Her lawyer drew out from questioning Alice that she was moving at less than the permitted rate. The verdict of the judge was, however, that Alice should pay the fine and costs, as there was no evidence to show

that she had slowed up when she came to the road that bore northward.

The fines were to be paid at the close of the session, so Alice and Beatrice, who had been accompanied by Stella and Mrs. McClaren, waited till the court adjourned.

A number of cases of automobile collisions were tried, and it became quite clear to the visitors that no Cape Codder was found guilty or had to pay the fines, and no matter what the evidence was, it was made very clear that the visitor was the one in fault. They concluded that this was because the Cape Codders all had votes in that county and the visitors hadn't.

A young man staying at the Belmore Hotel was followed by a policeman and it was found that he was going at the permitted speed. However, it was shown that he had left his driver's license at home. He had offered to take the officer with him to his home to get it, but he was fined for not having the card in a convenient place.

A young foreigner was fined for driving from his premises the son of a Cape Codder who had been disturbing and annoying his children. The question seemed to hang on whether the boy was trespassing on the foreigner's land when he chased him or whether he chased him after he had crossed the boundary of his land. At all events, the foreigner was fined $50.00. A tipstaff collected the fines at the close of court. As Stella and the girls waited, they overheard him whisper gleefully to the judge:

"I've got the $50.00; I collected it from him."

It seemed to the summer visitors that many of these petty officials thought they needed the money more

than their visitors did, and the balance would be conserved by the fines which changed pockets through the proceedings.

* * * * *

Mortimer had to drive most of Sunday night to be back to business Monday morning.

" No sleep till morn when youth and pleasure meet
To chase the glowing hours with flying feet."

Alice had asked him to call her up or telegraph an occasional night letter, instead of writing, and she also further instructed him to just say what he meant in " plain English," and avoid figurative language which might be interpreted in various ways. She explained that the expressions which spiced their conversations with, " Don't be silly," " boloney," " hot dog," " absolutely," etc., are not so satisfactory when written. She had really been quite nervous over deciding which meaning to read into them. She found the telegrams more satisfactory, especially the one stating, " Coming Saturday to dance and dine you at the Belmore." That was brief, to the point, and not subject to several interpretations. Letters are not at all the soul speakers that Ik Marvel called them in his " Reveries of a Bachelor." The too much or too little dependent on facility with the pen robbed them of dependability. Getting rid of the necessity of depending on them has hurried many marriages, and prevented others.

Cape Cod is a wonderful setting for courtship, with its lovely smooth roads winding through pine woods, trailing placid lakes and bays, and circling around to an expanse of blue ocean.

Everyone at the cottage was aroused of a sunny day

with the early bathers hallooing to each other as they hurried to the beach for a quick dip, then with laughter and song scampered back to dress for a breakfast of pancakes and maple syrup, or fried eggs with sausages or bacon and fragrant coffee.

One night it stormed. Nip, the pup, was afraid of thunder and lightning. He became restless, and Stella let him out. He immediately made a dive for under the cottage and would not come out again. He was still there in the morning, and all hands tried to get him, but he had crawled to some dark spot and could not find his way. It began to look as if the cottage might have to be torn down to get at him. A half-dozen deep excavations were made, but he found the hole near the porch and, guided by Stella's voice, finally found his way out.

* * * * *

Malcolm Buhl had arrived at the cottage and found Stella and Rosemary in a great state of agitation. They had seen in the morning papers that the oil stock in which they had both invested, and Stella very heavily, had taken a great slump. Prices had reached a very low level. With Stella's lack of speculative knowledge of stock operations, they had not known exactly what had taken place. Their purchase of common stock had involved most of Stella's resources and a considerable sum of Mrs. McClaren's.

Malcolm had hardly arrived when they bombarded him with questions. He looked serious, and felt reluctant to tell them the real state of affairs, but as they would learn it anyway he decided he had better enlighten them. He did his best to break the news

gently, but the fact of the matter was, that, on the advice of John Stone, Stella had bought far too heavily and her purchases were not sufficiently covered. The truth was that she had practically lost most of her money. It also became clear to Malcolm that John Stone had unloaded his doubtful securities on the women. He must have had some fear himself of what was coming, and got from under. When this was made clear to Stella and Mrs. McClaren, they were greatly shocked at his breach of faith. They had had absolute confidence in his advice, and it appeared that he had saved himself at their expense.

Malcolm Buhl went over the figures with them. Mrs. McClaren's losses were such that she would not be greatly crippled, as she had not had as much money at the time, to invest, as Stella, but the latter had been involved so that most of her resources were absorbed.

As the facts began to dawn upon Stella and Mrs. McClaren, they were fairly prostrated by the sudden news, and as Malcolm Buhl could think of nothing consoling to tell them, he excused himself to attend to his unpacking.

Mrs. McClaren and Stella looked at each other in dismay. Stella said: "What can I do?" as the uncontrolled tears ran down her cheeks.

"Will you have to do something, Stella?" Rosemary inquired with solicitation.

"Why, yes, I haven't enough left to live on. I surely will have to find something to do, that's certain. I never dreamed of this."

"Why, that is terrible to come to you now. Perhaps I could help you."

"Oh, no, Rosemary, I couldn't think of that. I couldn't let you do that. You are dependent yourself on your income for a living. I shall simply have to find some work to do."

"Did you ever earn any money, Stella, at anything?" said Rose, aghast.

"Oh, yes, I taught in the public schools when I was a girl. I suppose I could do that again. I have my certificates."

"You wouldn't have to do that right away, would you, Stella?"

"Yes, I would, as my income depended altogether on the dividends of my stock, and what is left wouldn't begin to support me. I shall have to sell my city property," she said, with distress, "and I love that place with its memories."

"Where would you live, then, if you did that?"

"I should have to stay here. It wouldn't cost me so much to keep up this little Cape Cottage as the city home. I shall have to stay here, there's nothing else for me to do."

"My, but you are brave, Stella. My losses are bad enough. If I had lost practically everything, as you have, I should be completely prostrated. I am so sorry."

"Well, so long as I have my health and strength I think I shall be able to get along," she said courageously.

* * * * *

Mortimer could not withstand the moonlight as it steamed over Hyannis Bay. He and Alice had driven their little house on wheels to the edge of the cliff and,

bathed in the mellow rays, he had told her he loved her and she had admitted her love for him. Stella was pleased, letters had been sent home, and the engagement of Mortimer and Alice was announced. Everyone approved. They planned to be married in the fall.

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The next morning and the following day made it only too clear that Malcolm Buhl was absolutely right with regard to the failure of Stella's venture in oil. Her money was irretrievably gone. The following days were spent by her and Rosemary in making inquiries in the vicinity as to the possibility of her securing a position as a teacher. Bob Gray had had his summer home at Harport for a good many years, and as his city home was in Boston, he was of great service to Stella.

Through his affiliations he was able to help her to secure the principalship of the Harport School, starting the following month of September.

Alice had elected to stay with her aunt, so they would continue on living in the cottage throughout the winter. With the disposal of the city property this would meet their living expenses.

* * * * *

On the morning of Malcolm Buhl's return from Pittsburgh he and Stella had talked over her affairs as they sat in the sun room. Malcolm had said :

" You look white and worried, Stella. You don't know how much it hurts me to see you so. I would love to do something to help. If I had my way there would never be anything to bother you. Can't I do something ? "

" Why, you have helped a great deal. Your advice has been of value to me, and it has been so lovely to have your friendship."

" You have more than my friendship, Stella. What I feel for you must be expressed by a much deeper word. Don't you know I love you, Stella—have loved you for a long, long time ? " he said, smiling into her eyes.

The glow and warmth of the contact seemed soothing and to put new life into her. She seemed to feel the friendship which Malcolm offered. He emanated a glow of protectiveness. " If I could only love him," thought Stella. " If he could only appeal to me as Allen Tyler does." She said softly :

" Malcolm, your friendship is something wonderful for me to have. I am so grateful for it. And now that I have been so unfortunate, I do not know what I would do without it. But you must not let your sympathy carry you off your feet."

" I don't know that I said anything about sympathy, Stella. This is my love that I am offering you," as he imprisoned her hand more tightly in his. " Can't you love me a little, dear ? "

" Oh, Malcolm, do not press me now for an answer. I am so upset about these losses I hardly know where I stand. I do not know what I would do without your loyal friendship. You will come back to see me, won't you ? "

" You bet I will, dear. You grow sweeter and lovelier to me every time I see you. I feel as if I could not live without you."

" Oh, Malcolm, I never dreamt that you thought so

much of me as that. It is sweet to have anyone think so much of me."

"Anyone?"

"Well, you," she smiled.

"I may hope a little, then?" he said, as his arm stole about her.

"I wish I could love you, Malcolm."

"Will you try?"

"I surely will."

His arm was around her. He drew her towards him and whispered as his lips met hers, "Then seal it with a kiss, dear."

Stella had watched him as he drove away, her lips still tingling from his caress, and wondering what had affected her so when she could not say she loved him. He seemed to attract her more than she had ever dreamed possible. She could not understand the nature of the feeling which held her when he was near. It seemed almost as if he drew her to him as a positive current does the negative.

* * * * *

Mortimer had arrived for over Sunday. After dinner he and Alice went for a drive in the long twilight. Their little house on wheels found a delightful spot overlooking the sea near Chatham Bars. The beauty of the night and their young love was almost overpowering. The ozone from the sea filled their lungs with invigoration. Life was marvellous, too beautiful! They longed for each other, for the consummation of their marriage. "Why delay?" thought Alice. "Why spend these lovely hours in painful efforts to observe the proprieties of so far and no further?" Her lips—indeed, her

whole being—quivered, and she experienced an ecstatic weakness when his lips met hers. The time had come when a wedding day several months off seemed years to wait for consummation. Why wait ?

It was Mortimer who had said, " If we could only be married at once. Why must we wait, sweetheart ? I love you so ! "

" Oh, but a wedding, that takes time to prepare for," said Alice, plainly tempted.

" Let's elope, and not have a wedding," Mortimer whispered.

The idea intrigued Alice. Wise in her generation, she felt that they had reached the stage of their love where physical attraction was getting out of control. There is always a place in love affairs where consummation is the only logical step. Why wait until the blush is off the rose ? A young girl always wants to marry at once at this stage, and if she could carry out her impulse, many regrets might be saved. Mortimer quoted persuasively :

" He either fears his fate too much
Or his desert is small,
Who will not put it to the touch
And win or lose it all."

* * * * *

Another week had rolled around, bringing Mortimer back for the week-end with Alice. Time seems short when we are happy, and drags so at other times.

The little house on wheels held two young conspirators who had decided to steal a march on the world and get married. Saturday had sealed their determination,

and Sunday was to be devoted to preliminaries. How to proceed.

First there would be the licence. Mortimer suggested a visit to the town hall of Harport at once. It was at the town centre, back of a grocery. Going there, timid enquiries met broad smiles and directions to go to Barnstable, the county seat about twenty miles away. As they got out of the car and went up the stone steps, it occurred to Mortimer that he had never actually put his proposal into so many words. Mortified at the thought, he proceeded now as they went up the steps, much to Alice's surprise, to say in a trembling voice, " Alice, sweetheart, will you marry me ? " One quick look at his serious face controlled her desire to laugh, as she gravely said " Yes, dear," with her eyes smiling up into his. Having found the official, he told them that they would have to go back to Harport and seek the town clerk, Mr. Charles Barrow, who lived in Pine Tree Lane. Twenty miles back again, and Mr. Barrow was intercepted in his backyard, just as he was about to drive away in his car.

" So you want to get married ? " he said. " But, of course, you know that in order to do that, the Massachusetts law requires you to announce your intentions at least five days ahead ? "

" Five days ! " and they had wanted to elope at once.

He said, " I will consider this your announcement—filing of intentions to marry."

" But can we not dispense with the five days," said Alice.

" By getting the judge of the circuit court to remit

them for good and sufficient reason. He holds court Monday morning in Harport."

Disappointed and weary, they wondered what to do next. They had been so sure of carrying out their plans that the drop from enthusiasm was depressing. Alice's eyes were doing their best to keep back the unruly tears.

" I'll telegraph the store that I am delayed, and stay over Monday," Mortimer volunteered, so they planned to go to the court and ask the permit from the judge. Mortimer could claim truthfully the necessity of returning to his business before five days.

Alice and Mortimer slipped away early Monday morning. The court was held in a store room of a building on Main Street. The judge sat at a long desk, on a platform above the criminals at the bar and their attorneys at another table. There was a court crier to whom Mortimer stated their business. He directed them to be seated in the chairs with the other dozen or so present to await their turn.

They sat patiently through a number of trials, varying from auto collisions to assaults, from 9 a.m. until noon. The cases all ended in fines for the summer visitors. This was the only season that the opportunity presented itself. The natives could be fined all the year around.

The judge was very friendly, and searched his books for the article governing the case, then for some time rummaged to find the necessary blank, which, not being found, he wrote one out, copying the form from the law book, which dispensed with the five days and authorised any town clerk in the sovereign State of Massachusetts to issue a marriage license. He suggested

that the young people present the permit for a license in the town where they wished to marry. Getting into the car again, they discussed where they had better be married. Alice knew the clergyman at Fairfleet, so she thought there would be no trouble about his marrying them. They drove the thirty-five odd miles to Fairfleet, and after finding the town hall, and driving around an hour until it opened up, they climbed upstairs to the office, only to be informed that the man who issued licenses lived in Gray's Lane, down the road a bit. They climbed into the car, still cheerful, drove a few miles the wrong way, then back again and found Gray's Lane. Yes, this was the right place at last. The town clerk talked a good while, and, just to be friendly, he explained a Masonic lithograph, showing the thirty-three degrees. This took a half-hour, and finally, after much searching through every drawer, he located the right book on the floor between the wall and desk, and then he leisurely filled in the licence to marry, on presentation of the judge's order. He volunteered the information that, in case of their wanting a divorce, they could write him, and for a small fee he would furnish a duplicate license. He then insisted on escorting them to their car, and recounted to them his own romance. He had married again about a month ago, and he said he really had need to have someone to tend the 'phone when he had to be absent bossing the crew on his oyster dredge out in the Bay.

It was nearly 2 p.m. when they broke away from him. They'd had nothing to eat since their early breakfast, and were nearly famished.

* * * * *

They found a little tea room and decided to hunt up the Reverend John Morrow as soon as they had eaten. On reaching his home they learned he was away and would not reach his home until very late that evening. "Who would have conceived so many obstacles to a legal marriage?" thought Alice, as they wearily climbed back into the car, and made for Harport. Mortimer quoted: "The course of true love never did run smooth."

* * * * *

Mortimer's father called him on long distance 'phone from Boston that evening and inquired caustically why he was not at his work. What could he say that would sound plausible? In reality his excuse was the best in the world; but what could he say to his father? He answered: "I've been knocked out a bit but will be back to-morrow."

* * * * *

Mr. Evans's telephone call had come just after dinner. Alice, and Mortimer had planned another trip to Fairfleet on a chance that the clergyman might have returned, to arrange for their marriage. Alice could see from Mortimer's troubled countenance that something was amiss. They had walked to the steps overlooking the sea and leading to the beach, while he told her of his father's message. He said, excitedly:

"What could I say in explanation? I have not been at this job two months, it's a fine opening, and I stay away without sending word. He wouldn't understand the real reason. No use in telling him. How could I? I told him I was knocked out a bit, and he asked me when I'd be there. I told him I'd be there

to-morrow. How could I tell him anything else ? "

Alice had looked at him with startled eyes, suddenly made dumb by the rush of feeling caused by his words. She wanted to cry out, " Don't go now, Mortimer, let's carry this through as we planned," but her pride held her. Should she be the one to insist ? He should be the one to want her. The thought of forcing the issue was abhorrent to her. The whole venture lost its charm unless he wanted it even more than she. The thought of an unwilling bridegroom almost strangled her. Had she been older, pride would not have been so important, and she would have forced the issue to a choice of action, but youth has not acquired the sense of values that later years bring. She just looked at him in dumb anguish. Sensing something of this, but not all, Mortimer, obsessed by the thought of jeopardising his position with the firm, his father's caustic and critical voice still ringing in his ears, was for the time more or less insensible to the fact that Alice had come to the sanctuary door, and it was being violently shut in her face. He was blinded to the fact that his earlier decision was the manly one, and the only right course of action. Everything had conspired to prevent their carrying out their perfectly logical and sane idea to marry at once. This final obstacle had, to Mortimer's vision, been unsurmountable. He had reached an *impasse*. Alice did not see it as he did. She weighed him in the balance and found him wanting, and she was right in her judgment. Like many another, when confronted by two courses of action, he had seized the easier, and more obvious.

" There is a tide in the affairs of men
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune,

Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows and in miseries."

He could not know that this false step, this moment of bad judgment, would cost him and Alice dear. If he had only decided to remain until the next day and follow out their plans all would have been so different for both of them.

Unconsciously fearing that he might be swayed to change his mind, he steeled himself to act quickly, and announced that he would start at once and ride most of the night, so he would be at the store in the morning. This seemed to be the most important thing in the world for the minute. To Alice it seemed trivial. She was rendered dumb by her emotion. Her eyes alone spoke their anguish, and the memory of them tortured him as he speeded toward Boston, and the thought seeped into his mind that he had not chosen right, but had been startled like a hare that darts the wrong way, to its own destruction.

After Mortimer had gone, Alice returned to the steps and sat long by herself, filled with feelings of disappointment, bitterness and even rage. She felt that she had been valued lightly, that she never could feel the same to Mortimer again. She almost hated him. Life had lost all its glamour for her. The stillness, quiet and chill of the ocean mist saturated her body and soul. She thought, " How easy it would be to still the tumult in her brain, walk out into these still waters of the Bay, further, further, too far to swim back ? " Too easy ! Alice was not a coward.

* * * * *

Bob Gray had come to Pittsburgh to see Mrs. Mc-

Claren. She had a lovely suite at the Schenley Hotel. They had had one of the delicious dinners afforded by the hotel in her little dining room, and James, Stella's former butler, had served the coffee in the living room.

They had been enjoying their téte-à-téte ; Bob's glowing eyes held a portent of a story that must be told, and Rosemary frequently veiled hers from the warmth of his glances.

The telephone rang as the cups were cleared away. Rosemary's face clouded as she recognised the voice of John Stone speaking to her. As she had answered the 'phone, it was too late to plead an excuse, so he was ushered up to the suite.

Bob Gray made no effort to be friendly. They sat rather stiffly for awhile, but in answer to John's polite queries as to Stella's health, Bob broke in with :

" You could hardly expect her to be thriving after ruining her by loading her up with your worthless stocks ! "

Stone coloured, looked astonished and stammered, " You wrong me, how could I foresee the crash ? "

" No, you couldn't foresee the crash, but almost any speculator would know the market was due to break."

" Of course I knew there was instability, but who could say where it would hit ? "

" Just so, that's why you unloaded that oil stuff on Stella and Rose. You didn't want the risk yourself and passed it on to two unsuspecting women."

" You wrong me," he said, with a hangdog look and beseeching eyes that searched Rosemary's for sympathy, but hers did not soften.

" I don't think I do. I'd be the last man on earth to want to misjudge anyone, but you're no novice, you've been speculating all your life. If those stocks were safe, why did you sell yours to the women ? Why didn't you keep them and buy more for them ? " (Bob had always intuitively disliked Stone, and since the women's losses, he had been aching for an opportunity to lay him out, and was now thoroughly enjoying the man's embarrassment.)

Turning a red face to Rosemary, Stone blurted out : " But, Rosemary, you do not believe this of me ? "

" Well, John, I do not know what else to believe."

" I came to-night, Rosemary, to ask you to let me reimburse you for your oil losses. You have no idea how much I have worried about it. You will allow me ? "

" My losses, as you know very well, John, were not so great as to incommode me ; but they are the least of it. I think the worst phase of this miserable affair is that Stella, who has no business sense, would never have invested so largely if I had not also bought. She felt so certain that caring for me as you have, you would not advise me unwisely, and that she was safe in doing as I did. I have felt myself unwittingly to have been the cause of her losses, and have been desperately worried about it. It was terrible to be the cause of her ruin. Poor, dear Stella ! "

Bob here sarcastically cut in with, " It was really a master-stroke, Stone, to use Rosemary as a bait to catch Stella, and still not ruin Rosemary, especially when you wanted to marry her ! "

Stone turned with a snarl, his neck and face flaming,

and made a quick lunge at Bob, who alertly dodged the descending blow, aimed at his face, and grappled with Stone.

The tea-table was upset with a crash, and Rosemary only partially controlled a scream. She at once attempted to separate the men as James and the maid ran into the room. Bob was fully a match for Stone, but Rosemary succeeded in separating them.

Stone took his hat and made for the door.

"I am sorry that this had to happen, John," said Rosemary in tears, opening the door.

"I'm not," said Bob. With a look of rage Stone dashed from the room.

"Oh, Bob, that was terrible!" said Rosemary, turning to him in dismay and bursting into tears. He led her to the davenport, and did his best to soothe her.

* * * * *

Mortimer had been gone only a few days when Alice received a night letter stating that he had been sent to Joseph Horne and Company, the Pittsburgh Store. His father thought the place a better one for his advancement, and it meant more salary. (The older man, with worldly wisdom, and a vague fear of he knew not what —hasty marriage, entanglements, responsibilities that might interfere with Mortimer's material advancement, deemed it safer to have him further away from Alice; interfering blindly, as parents so often do, and causing the very difficulties they are trying to prevent.) Mortimer was doing as well, really better than most young men of his age, and his prospects were good. There was practically no reason why he and Alice could

not be married and live simply in a small apartment, as most young couples do.

It appeared that for some time Alice would have to depend on an occasional night letter from Mortimer, and this at a time when her mind was full of resentment, hurt pride and shattered illusions.

* * * * *

Bob Gray had been apologetic after Stone's hasty exit, and had expressed his regret for the upset tea-table and broken china, but Rosemary could see with it all he was really quite satisfied with himself.

" Come now, Bob," she said, archly, as the atmosphere cleared, the debris had been removed and they resumed their places on the couch, " you're not so penitent as you're letting on."

Bob laughed, and said, " Well, now, Rosemary, you'll have to admit he deserved it. Didn't he ? "

" I'm afraid he did, but it was awful."

" He had his nerve to try to continue his friendship with you."

" Yes, he seemed not to realise how terrible it was for me to have been used that way to get Stella to invest. I am broken-hearted over it. I've tried to get Stella to give up that school-teaching, live with me and share what I have, but she will not. I have written her that I feel so much to blame that I am bound to do what I can to reimburse her, but she says she wouldn't dream of letting me do that, and that I am supersensitive about all of it, and have no reason to blame myself at all."

" Of course she is right, Rosemary. I can understand how you feel about it, but there is positively no reason

to blame yourself in any way. You could not have foreseen Stone's duplicity. Is Stella in love with Tyler, Rose ? "

" I feel quite sure she thought she was, but I believe she was in love with what she imagined about him. He is a sophisticate. Sentiment nauseates him, while Stella lives on it. A world without sentiment would be a dreary place to her. Her whole nature withers without someone to really love and need her. Allen would laugh at his needing anyone, or at a lasting love affair for that matter. He does not believe there is such a thing."

" Probably his past experience in that way accounts for that."

" Do you think so ? "

" It is likely. A man who has never married, and who has had several liaisons, would be likely to decide that love is governed completely by sex attraction and cannot last."

" A sort of Lord Byron ? "

" Oh, no, not as bad as that. He is a man of culture and refinement. Byron was a Turk, but if a man's life is frittered away on liaisons, he finally loses the power of loving a woman in a lasting way, and what he has never experienced, he does not believe exists. You and I, Rosemary, know better. We have both loved, through many years, a mate who was more than a mere companion for idle hours. Rosemary, I have grown to love you that way. You are so dear and precious to me, that life wouldn't be worth living without you. The sky wouldn't be blue, nothing could charm

me without you to enjoy it with me. Can you love me a little, dear ? "

Rosemary's eyes had kindled as he spoke, and as he drew her to him, they melted into acquiescence. She knew she loved Bob Gray as he loved her, and that the years would only bind them closer to each other, as they grew older.

* * * * *

The distance from Pittsburgh to Cape Cod, 750 miles, even with an airplane, was a good bit to cut down, now that Mortimer was busy from morning until night at work from Sunday to Sunday. He was unhappy and regretful that he had not stayed on another day, married and brought Alice back with him. He had been sending an occasional night letter, his letter writing was so inadequate, and Alice's letters were unsatisfactory, too. They had a chilliness in them that he had never before noticed, and it seemed that he was more unhappy after reading them than before. He was restless of an evening, and did not know what to do with himself. He had made a number of acquaintances, and met some nice men, who had asked him to join them in making up little groups with girls to the country clubs for dinner and dancing. He had enjoyed them to a certain extent, but his interest in Alice made him a more or less unsatisfactory partner for the girl he escorted.

From his father's point of view he had done the only sensible thing in returning to business, but, looking at it with his own better judgment, he realised that an extra day at the Cape would not have jeopardised his chances of advancement to any extent, whereas he certainly had made Alice unhappy and destroyed her

absolute faith and trust in him. He felt dissatisfied with himself and depressed. He longed to see Alice again soon, but had no idea how it could be planned in the near future, as the trip back and forth could not be planned for a week-end, and that was all there was in prospect for weeks to come.

He had been spending his Sundays, when the weather permitted, in trips to Mayer's Flying Field, near Pittsburgh, and short flights in his plane.

Alice had been receiving her occasional night letters from Mortimer. There was practically nothing in them to assuage her loneliness and hurt feelings. The fact was, though she did not suspect it, that Mortimer, having nothing to do with his evenings, had become very intimate with a group of young people who were spending several nights a week in a very lively manner, driving to road houses, eating dinners where flasks were promptly used and quickly emptied, riding home in back seats with a girl slightly inebriated and proprieties dispensed with, and he had, as a consequence, made advances and later a few calls on one of the girls, Elva Sharon. He was attracted to her in a sort of way. She was what the boys called "a good sport," and considered petting and love-making as a matter of course in her evening's entertainment.

Mortimer had been drifting along in this way for several weeks, filling his idle time, but more or less bothered by a feeling of inconstancy towards Alice which irked and annoyed him. It was too far to go to Alice for consolation, so he went out to spend the evening with Elva. It was not long before he perceived that she was very much in love with him. It was after

their return one Saturday evening from a late party that he had come in with her, bringing her home. They had had too much to drink, and they were both young and physically attractive. Elva threw herself into his arms with abandon. If he had not taken that last drink he might have been able to prevent what followed. Her abandon tempted him too greatly, and she was an up-to-date flapper. Abandon was in her line; Elva was "a good fellow." When Mortimer decided that he must leave it was early Sunday morning, and he had asked Elva to marry him. He felt that was the only thing left for him to do. Had her other lovers been so gallant, Elva would have been married some years before, but Mortimer didn't know that.

Monday morning Mortimer called up the store, and said he would not be able to be there that day. He met Elva at the City-County Building; they got their licence and were married that evening by an obliging minister.

Alice did not get her usual night letter Sunday morning, but Monday she received a special delivery letter. It read:

"Dear Alice: I am overwhelmed with embarrassment to tell you that through circumstances that are irrevocable, I am obliged to break my engagement with you. When you receive this letter I will be married to Elva Sharon of Pittsburgh.

"I can only ask you to forget me—to ask you to forgive me would be more than I deserve or could expect.

Mortimer."

* * * * *

Stella, coming out on to the veranda, was startled to see Alice white and distraught, the open letter in her lap, and staring wildly.

"Alice, darling!" she cried. "What has happened to you?" Sitting down beside her she gathered the little limp figure into her arms. It was only after much persuasion and petting that the flood-gates of tears broke forth and Alice pillowed her head on Stella's bosom while she read the letter that had destroyed Alice's beautiful dream of happy love.

It was some time before Alice's paroxysm of sobbing ceased. Stella finally got her to bed and, lying down beside her, patted her head and soothed her till she slept.

It would be many a day before little Alice would recover from the sledge-hammer blow with which life had shattered her summer idyll.

* * * * *

Stella had been teaching a month. She sat in the sun-room overlooking the ocean; the day was grey and overcast. The cottage was lovely during July and August, but after the middle of September the coolness and moisture which was so acceptable in the summer months became chilly and depressive. Further inland, on the Cape, on bright, sunny days, one would not notice this, but being right on the edge of the cliff, the very thing which made the cottage lovely on hot days in summer, caused it to be less desirable during other seasons. The neighbours, too, had all gone home.

Teaching is never very easy, the day had been windy, the children restless. Stella felt as if she had used up all her nerve force, and as she sat now, looking out over

the water, her physical weariness made her a prey to the loneliness that oppressed her.

Alice's buoyant nature had reasserted itself. Stella's sympathy and wisdom had done much to make her see that, at her age, life still held a promise of joy and love for her. She had gone home to visit her people. The butler had not been needed, so Stella had let him and other help go so that she was alone except for a maid of all work. Nip, the little Boston terrier, was welcome company these days as he stalked Stella wherever she moved, and jumped up beside her when she sat down on the couch. He looked at her wistfully now as she stroked his head. "How loving a dog is," thought Stella. "Nip would actually go without food to be with me. How many humans would do that!" He would not stop long enough to eat, and left his food to follow Stella, getting so weak that he could hardly stand on his legs. Noticing it, she had made it a point at all times to stay with him while he ate, to see that he got enough. The kitten that Malcalm had brought was also company. She seemed smarter even than the dog. She was like a little old-fashioned sister to Nip. He was afraid of the shiny, wooden stairway, and would get up as far as the middle of the steps, lose confidence in himself, slip back, and straddling three steps he would be unable to move, and let out a pitiful wail. Stella said she wished he'd take up Christian Science. Kitty did her best to convert him. She would rush up and down the steps and show him how clever she was, jump from banister to stairs, and whisk about showing her ability, but to no avail. She was always friendly with visitors, even going so

far as mounting on the back of the chair, especially when Nip proved unfriendly. She often gave him an object lesson by extending her little tongue and implanting a kiss on the cheek, much to the consternation of the occupant of the chair, who, after one or two little brushes of the hand, discovered that it was Kitty who had been so affectionate. She and Nip had a wonderful time playing together. Just when Nip was about to catch her she would jump out of his reach on to a chair and tease him with her paw. Stella was often diverted with their antics. She looked out over the water, it seemed grey and dreary. The colours of bathers arrayed in their bright bathing togs, the umbrellas, awnings and bright chairs dotting the beach were all missing. "What is so lonesome," she thought, "as a resort after the summer visitors have gone home?" She was depressed, and longed for companionship. She took her hat and coat and, calling to Nip, decided to walk to the post office to see if there were any missives from friends.

* * * * *

Stella found several letters in the mail. One was from Mrs. McClaren, who had returned to Pittsburgh. Bob Gray had gone to Boston to his winter home. Rosemary, in her letter, stated that she had just had a nice letter from him, and that she expected him in Pittsburgh in a few days.

Allen Tyler's letter was from the Riviera. He had gone abroad with a party of friends, and he had written urging Stella to be one of the party. Her financial difficulties would have made that impossible, but some-

how Stella had no desire to go. She had written him that her losses were such that she could not accept the invitation. An answer had come post haste asking her to go as his guest, and assuring her that he would be greatly honoured if she would accept. Of course she had declined, the last of her beautiful illusions about Allen had been laid to rest. The letter, which she had just received, was another urgent request for her to join the party at the Riviera, with protestations of love. She had weighed that kind of love in the balance and found it wanting. She turned the letters over and opened the one from Pittsburgh. She had saved it for the last, somehow feeling the writer to be the best friend she had. Yes, it was from Malcolm Buhl. It was a brief inquiry for her health, and stated that he was inviting himself up to Harport to visit her the next week-end. . . .

* * * * *

It was a beautiful October day at the Cape, clear and radiant with sunshine. Malcolm Buhl had arrived on Friday, and Saturday was a wonderful day to drive through the roads flanked with trees already showing their rich autumn tones. It was cosy in the closed car. Nearly every sweetheart has his little house on wheels nowadays, and Love's young dream flourishes with every encouragement. Malcolm Buhl was always at his best with Stella when he was at the wheel. Formalities were removed. The parlour sofa of bygone days was never as homey and secluded as the auto of to-day.

Each drive with Malcolm had brought him im-

perceptibly nearer to Stella. She had always thought of him as a friend, but she could no longer doubt the attraction she felt for him, nor ignore the force of his unselfish and overflowing love for her which was without limitations. His one desire was to serve her. He was quite unconscious of the tingling vibrations that she felt when he touched her hand or his lips met hers, a positive current that electrifies and harmonises. Her lonely days at the cottage had helped her sift the gold from the dross. When his eyes lovingly devoured her, hers at last responded with the soft glow of love.

The sun was setting over the lake, great white clouds formed like giant wings, caught and reflected its roseate glow and extended like a benediction over their heads as her lips responded to his.

* * * * *

They were married by the Reverend John Morrow in the little vine-covered church at Fairfleet. There were no attendants but the witnesses. They knelt where the sunlight from the stained glass east window fell upon them and bathed them in golden rays. When they received communion together at the chancel rail, they were still enveloped in effulgent sunshine.

Stella did not feel alone in the little church, empty of all visible forms but the celebrant, the participant and witnesses. It seemed to her that all her dear ones in the other world were happy to be with them at this ceremony, and one after another they came to her mind and joined in asking for her and Malcolm, heaven's choicest blessings. The little church, the sunlight, the invisible presence felt, the exaltation, produced an

impress which lasted during the day and in the future would be often recalled.

After a Cape Cod honeymoon a surprise awaited Stella on their arrival in Pittsburgh. They drove to her beautiful old home, which she had loved so dearly but had been obliged to sell. Malcolm Buhl had been the purchaser.

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